THE WISDOM OF BERNARD SHAW

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THE WISDOM OF BERNARD SHAW

BEING PASSAGES FROM THE WORKS OF BERNARD SHAW

CHOSEN BY CHARLOTTE F. SHAW

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THE WISDOM OF BERNARD SHAW

THE accomplishments which distinguish the trained actor from the amateur are not the same as the qualities which distinguish great actors from ordinary ones. Take, first, the difference between the trained actor and the man in the street—the layman. When the layman walks, his only object is to get to Charing Cross; when he makes a gesture, it is to attract the attention of a cab-driver or bus-conductor; when he speaks, it is to convey or demand information, or tell a lie, or otherwise further his prosaic ends; when he moves his hands, it is to put up his umbrella or to take out his handkerchief. On the stage these merely utilitarian purposes are only simulated: the real purpose is to produce an effect on the senses and imagination of the spectator. The actor's walk is addressed to the spectator's sense of grace, dignity, or strength of movement, and his voice to the listener's sense of expressive or beautiful tone. Impersonations even of

ugly or deformed creatures with harsh voices have the same artistic character, and are agreeably disagreeable, just as the most extreme discords in a symphony or opera are distinctly musical, and perfectly different to the random cacophonies which arise from the tuning of the orchestra. Now, the power of complying with artistic conditions without being so preoccupied by them as to be incapable of thinking of anything else is hard to acquire, and can be perfected only by long practice. Talma estimated the apprenticeship at twenty years. The habit can never become as instinctive as keeping one's balance, for instance, because failure in that for even an instant means a fall, so that the practice in it is lifelong and constant; whereas the artistic habit lapses more or less in the absence of an audience, and even on the stage can be forgotten for long periods without any worse consequences than a loss of charm which nothing may bring to the

actor's attention. The real safeguard against such lapses is a sense of beauty —the artistic sense—cultivated to such a degree of sensitiveness that a coarse or prosaic tone, or an awkward gesture, jars instantly on the artist as a note out of tune jars on the musician. The defect of the old-fashioned systems of training for the stage was that they attempted to prescribe the conclusions of this constantly evolving artistic sense instead of cultivating it and leaving the artist to its guidance. Thus they taught you an old-fashioned stage-walk, an old-fashioned stage-voice, an old-fashioned stage way of kneeling, of sitting down, of shaking hands, of picking up a handkerchief, and so on, each of them supposed to be the final and perfect way of doing it. The end of that was, of course, to discredit training altogether. But neglect of training very quickly discredits itself; and it will now perhaps be admitted that the awakening and culture of the artistic conscience is a real

service which a teacher can render to an actor. When that conscience is thoroughly awakened and cultivated, when a person can maintain vigilant artistic sensitiveness throughout a performance whilst making all the movements required by the action of the drama, and speaking all its dialogue graphically without preoccupation or embarrassment, then that person is a technically competent artistic actor, able to play a part of which he hardly comprehends one line, in a play of which he knows nothing except his own words and speeches and the cues thereto, much more intelligibly and effectively, as well as agreeably, than a statesman with ten times his general ability could. He can only be beaten, in fact, by the professional rival who has equal skill in execution, but has more numerous and valuable ideas to execute. The finest actors—Jefferson, Coquelin, Salvini, Duse—carry this technical skill to such a point that though

they act so beautifully that you cannot take your eyes off them even when you do not understand what they are saying, yet the beauty seems so spontaneous and inevitable that it is generally quite impossible to persuade their admirers that there is any art or study in their acting at all. *The Saturday Review*, 12th October 1895.

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Admonitions

YOU cannot believe in honor until you have achieved it. Better keep yourself clean and bright: you are the window through which you must see the world. *Man and Superman*, p. 233.

Self-sacrifice enables us to sacrifice other people without blushing.

If you begin by sacrificing yourself to those you love, you will end by hating those to whom you have sacrificed yourself. *Man and Superman*, p. 244.

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All the World's a Stage

NOTHING is more significant than the statement that "all the world's a stage." The whole world *is* ruled by

theatrical illusion. Between the Cæsars, the emperors, the Christian heroes, the Grand Old Men, the kings, prophets, saints, heroes and judges, of the newspapers and the popular imagination, and the actual Juliuses, Napoleons, Gordons, Gladstones, and so on, there is the same difference as between Hamlet and Sir Henry Irving. The case is not one of fanciful similitude, but of identity. The great critics are those who penetrate and understand the illusion: the great men are those who, as dramatists planning the development of nations, or as actors carrying out the drama, are behind the scenes of the world instead of gaping and gushing in the auditorium after paying their taxes at the doors. And yet Shakespear, with the rarest opportunities of observing this, lets his pregnant metaphor slip, and, with his usual incapacity for pursuing any idea, wanders off into a grandmotherly Elizabethan edition of the advertisement of Cassell's Popular

Educator. How anybody over the age of seven can take any interest in a literary toy so silly in its conceit and common in its ideas as the Seven Ages of Man passes my understanding. *The Saturday Review*, 5th December 1896.

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APPLIED to the industrial or political machinery of modern society, anarchy must always reduce itself speedily to absurdity. Even the modified form of anarchy on which modern civilization is based: that is, the abandonment of industry, in the name of individual liberty, to the upshot of competition for personal gain between private capitalists, is a disastrous failure, and is, by the mere necessities of the case, giving way to ordered Socialism. *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 79. Anarchy

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CÆSAR [*seeing Apollodorus and calling to him*] Apollodorus: I leave the art of Egypt in your charge. Re- Art

member: Rome loves art and will encourage it ungrudgingly.

APOLLODORUS. I understand, Cæsar. Rome will produce no art itself; but it will buy up and take away whatever the other nations produce.

CÆSAR. What! Rome produce no art! Is peace not an art? Is war not an art? Is government not an art? Is civilization not an art? All these we give you in exchange for a few ornaments. *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, p. 193.

The claim of art to our respect must stand or fall with the validity of its pretension to cultivate and refine our senses and faculties until seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting become highly conscious and critical acts with us, protesting vehemently against ugliness, noise, discordant speech, frowzy clothing, and re-breathed air, and taking keen interest and pleasure in beauty, in music, and in nature, besides making us insist, as necessary for com-

fort and decency, on clean, wholesome, handsome fabrics to wear, and utensils of fine material and elegant workmanship to handle. Further, art should refine our sense of character and conduct, of justice and sympathy, greatly heightening our self-knowledge, self-control, precision of action, and considerateness, and making us intolerant of baseness, cruelty, injustice, and intellectual superficiality or vulgarity. The worthy artist or craftsman is he who serves the physical and moral senses by feeding them with pictures, musical compositions, pleasant houses and gardens, good clothes and fine implements, poems, fictions, essays, and dramas which call the heightened senses and ennobled faculties into pleasurable activity. The great artist is he who goes a step beyond the demand, and, by supplying works of a higher beauty and a higher interest than have yet been perceived, succeeds, after a brief struggle with its strangeness, in adding this fresh

extension of sense to the heritage of the race. *The Sanity of Art*, p. 68.

I am convinced that fine art is the subtlest, the most seductive, the most effective means of moral propagandism in the world, excepting only the example of personal conduct; and I waive even this exception in favour of the art of the stage, because it works by exhibiting examples of personal conduct made intelligible and moving to crowds of unobservant unreflecting people to whom real life means nothing. *Author's Apology. Mrs. Warren's Profession*, p. 25.

The severity of artistic discipline is produced by the fact that in creative art no ready-made rules can help you. There is nothing to guide you to the right expression for your thought except your own sense of beauty and fitness; and, as you advance upon those who went before you, that sense of beauty and fitness is necessarily often in

conflict, not with fixed rules, because there are no rules, but with precedents. *The Sanity of Art*, p. 82.

In all the arts there is a distinction between the mere physical artistic faculty, consisting of a very fine sense of color, form, tone, rhythmic movement, and so on, and that supreme sense of humanity which alone can raise the art work created by the physical artistic faculties into a convincing presentment of life. *The Saturday Review*, 6th June 1896.

All art is gratuitous; and the will to produce it, like the will to live, must be held to justify itself. When that will is associated with brilliant specific talent for the established forms and attractions of fine art, no advance is made, because the artist can distinguish and satisfy himself by novel, witty and touching rehandlings of the old themes. If Wagner had possessed the astonishing specific talent of Mozart, or Mr. George Meredith that of Dickens, they

would not have been forced to make a revolution in their art by lifting it to a plane on which it developed new and extraordinary specific talents in themselves, and revealed the old specific talents to them as mere hindrances. A critic who has not learned this from the nineteenth century has learned nothing. Such a one, on discovering that a writer is deficient in all current specific talents, at once condemns him without benefit of clergy. But for my part, when I find the characteristic devotion of the born artist accompanied by a hopeless deficiency in all the fashionable specific talents I immediately give him my most respectful attention, and am particularly careful to indulge in none of those prophecies of extinction which were so confidently launched at Wagner, Ibsen, and Meredith. *The Saturday Review*, 2nd April 1898.

I call Madox Brown a Realist because he had vitality enough to find intense

enjoyment and inexhaustible interest in the world as it really is, unbeautified, unidealized, untitivated in any way for artistic consumption. This love of life and knowledge of its worth is a rare thing—whole Alps and Andes above the common market demand for prettiness, fashionableness, refinement, elegance of style, delicacy of sentiment, charm of character, sympathetic philosophy (the philosophy of the happy ending), decorative moral systems contrasting roseate and rapturous vice with lilied and languorous virtue, and making "Love" face both ways as the universal softener and redeemer, the whole being worshipped as beauty or virtue, and set in the place of life to narrow and condition it instead of enlarging and fulfilling it. To such self-indulgence most artists are mere pandars; for the sense of beauty needed to make a man an artist is so strong that the sense of life in him must needs be quite prodigious to overpower it. It must always

be a mystery to the ordinary beauty-fancying, life-shirking amateur how the realist in art can bring his unbeautified, remorseless celebrations of common life in among so many pretty, pleasant, sweet, noble, touching fictions, and yet take his place there among the highest, although the railing, the derision, the protest, the positive disgust, are almost universal at first. *The Saturday Review*, 13th March 1897.

Turn to Mr. Watts, and you are instantly in a visionary world, in which life fades into mist, and the imaginings of nobility and beauty with which we invest life become embodied and visible. The gallery is one great transfiguration: life, death, love, and mankind are no longer themselves: they are glorified, sublimified, lovelified: the very draperies are either rippling lakes of color harmony, or splendid banners like the flying cloak of Titian's Bacchus in the National Gallery. To pretend that the

world is like this is to live the heavenly life. It is to lose the whole world and gain one's own soul. Until you have reached the point of realizing what an astonishingly bad bargain that is you cannot doubt the sufficiency of Mr. Watts' art, provided only your eyes are fine enough to understand its language of line and color. *The Saturday Review*, 13th March 1897.

Truly the secret of wisdom is to become as a little child again. But our art-loving authors will not learn the lesson. They cannot understand that when a great genius lays hands on a form of art and fascinates all who understand its language with it, he makes it say all that it can say, and leaves it exhausted. When Bach has got the last word out of the fugue, Mozart out of the opera, Beethoven out of the symphony, Wagner out of the symphonic drama, their enraptured admirers exclaim: "Our masters have shewn us the way: let us

compose some more fugues, operas, symphonies, and Bayreuth dramas." Through just the same error the men who have turned dramatists on the frivolous ground of their love for the theatre have plagued a weary world with Shakespearean dramas in five acts and in blank verse, with artificial comedies after Congreve and Sheridan, and with the romantic goody-goody fiction which was squeezed dry by a hundred strong hands in the first half of this century. It is only when we are dissatisfied with existing masterpieces that we create new ones: if we merely worship them, we only try to repeat the exploit of their creator by picking out the titbits and stringing them together, in some feeble fashion of our own, into a "new and original" botching of what our master left a good and finished job. We are encouraged in our folly by the need of the multitude for intermediaries between its childishness and the maturity of the mighty men of art, and

also by the fact that art fecundated by itself gains a certain lapdog refinement, very acceptable to lovers of lapdogs. The Incas of Peru cultivated their royal race in this way, each Inca marrying his sister. The result was that an average Inca was worth about as much as an average fashionable drama bred carefully from the last pair of fashionable dramas, themselves bred in the same way, with perhaps a cross of novel. But vital art work comes always from a cross between art and life: art being of one sex only, and quite sterile by itself. Such a cross is always possible; for though the artist may not have the capacity to bring his art into contact with the higher life of his time, fermenting in its religion, its philosophy, its science, and its statesmanship (perhaps, indeed, there may not be any statesmanship going), he can at least bring it into contact with the obvious life and common passions of the streets. *The Saturday Review*, 6th November 1897.

Art for Art's Sake

ART for art's sake" means in practice "Success for money's sake." Great art is never produced for its own sake. It is too difficult to be worth the effort. All the great artists enter into a terrible struggle with the public, often involving bitter poverty and personal humiliation, and always involving calumny and persecution, because they believe they are apostles doing what used to be called the Will of God, and is now called by many prosaic names, of which "public work" is the least controversial. And when these artists have travailed and brought forth, and at last forced the public to associate keen pleasure and deep interest with their methods and morals, a crowd of smaller men—art confectioners, we may call them—hasten to make pretty entertainments out of scrap and crumbs from the masterpieces. Offenbach laid hands on Beethoven's Seventh Symphony and produced J'aime les militaires, to the disgust of Schumann, who was nevertheless

doing precisely the same thing in a more pretentious way. And these confectioners are by no means mere plagiarists. They bring all sorts of engaging qualities to their work: love of beauty, desire to give pleasure, tenderness, humor, everything except the high republican conscience, the identification of the artist's purpose with the purpose of the universe, which alone makes an artist great. *Three Plays by Brieux*, Preface, pp. xx., xxi.

New ideas make their technique as water makes its channel; and the technician without ideas is as useless as the canal constructor without water, though he may do very skilfully what the Mississippi does very crudely. *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. xxxiii.

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The Artist and the Tradesman

WHAT happens under our system is that the tradesman supersedes the artist. The tradesman adapts himself to the market: he offers you a third-

class article for a third-class price, and a second-class article for a second-class price, preferring the third-class contract if, as often happens, it is the more profitable. First-class work he cannot do at all; and the man who can do it, the artist, cannot do anything else. When second or third-class work is demanded, he may, and very often does, try to do it for the sake of the money, a man with a wife and family being, as Talleyrand said, capable of anything; but he inevitably botches it, and only confirms his employer's prejudice against artists and in favor of tradesmen. A Bovril or Condensed Milk poster by Sir Edward Burne-Jones would probably be worth no more than Wagner's Philadelphia Centennial march.

But the world is not quite so clear-cut as this description of it. The distinction between artist and tradesman is not a distinction between one man and another, but between two sides of the same man. The number of persons who, be-

ing unquestionably eminent artists, have yet been so absolutely uncommercial as to be uninfluenced by their market, is very small indeed; and of these some, like Giotto, have found their market so entirely sympathetic that in doing as they pleased they simply sailed before the wind; whilst others, like Shelley, Goethe, or Landor, were independent of it in point of both money and social standing. Beethoven, Wagner, and Ibsen, though dependent on their art for both money and position, certainly did eventually take Europe by the scruff of the neck and say, "You shall take what I like and not what you want"; but in comparison with Bunyan and Blake they were keen men of business. I know of no dramatist dependent on his profession who has not been very seriously influenced by his market. Shakespear's case, the leading one for England, is beyond a doubt. He would have starved if he had followed his bent towards a genuine science of life and

character. His instinct for reality had to be surreptitiously gratified under the mask of comedy. Dr. Johnson pointed out long ago that it was only in comedy that our immortal stalking horse for bogus criticism was really happy. To this day such splendid melodramas as Othello, with its noble savage, its villain, its funny man, its carefully assorted pathetic and heavy feminine interest, its smothering and suicide, its police-court morality and commonplace thought; or, As You Like It, with its Adelphi hero, its prize fight, its coquet in tights, its good father and wicked uncle, represent the greatness of Shakspear to nine-tenths of his adorers, who mostly, when you mention Helena, or the Countess of Rousillon, or Isabella, or Cressida, or Ulysses, or Bertram stare at you, and think you are talking about Calderon and Homer. *The Saturday Review,* 12th February 1898.

Assassination

SURELY, if dramatists are bent on the fundamentally impossible task of inventing pardonable assassinations, they should recognize that the man who, for no reward or satisfaction to his direct personal instincts, but at the risk of his own life, kills for the sake of an idea, believing that he is striking in the cause of the general weal, is at any rate more respectable than the dehumanized creature who stabs or shoots to slake a passion which he has in common with a stag. *The Saturday Review,* 1st June 1895.

Assertions

HUMANITY is neither a commercial nor a political speculation, but a condition of noble life.

Civilization and the Soldier. *The Humane Review,* January 1901, p. 312.

SIR PATRICK. There are two things that can be wrong with any man. One of them is a cheque. The other is a

woman. Until you know that a man's sound on these two points, you know nothing about him. *The Doctor's Dilemma,* p. 47.

Honor is worth its danger and its cost, and life is worthless without honor. *John Bull's Other Island,* p. lxi.

The balance sheet of a city's welfare cannot be stated in figures. Counters of a much more spiritual kind are needed, and some imagination and conscience to add them up, as well. *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading,* p. v.

It is only the man who has no message who is too fastidious to beat the drum at the door of his booth. *Three Plays by Brieux, Preface,* p. x.

BOHUN. McComas: there will be no difficulty about the important questions. There never is. It is the trifles that will wreck you at the harbor mouth. *You Never Can Tell,* p. 323.

MRS. CLANDON. Let me tell you, Mr. Valentine, that a life devoted to the Cause of Humanity has enthusiasms and passions to offer which far transcend the selfish personal infatuations and sentimentalities of romance. *You Never Can Tell*, p. 296.

LESBIA. As I said before, an English lady is not the slave of her appetites. That is what an English gentleman seems incapable of understanding. *Getting Married*, p. 220.

POTHINUS [*bitterly*] Is it possible that Cæsar, the conqueror of the world, has time to occupy himself with such a trifle as our taxes?

CÆSAR. My friend: taxes are the chief business of a conqueror of the world. *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, p. 117.

Martyrdom, sir, is what these people like: it is the only way in which a man can become famous without ability. *The Devil's Disciple*, p. 56.

Progress is not achieved by panic-stricken rushes back and forward between one folly and another, but by sifting all movements and adding what survives the sifting to the fabric of our morality. *Three Plays by Brieux,* Preface, p. xliv.

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The Puritan Attitude

I HAVE, I think, always been a Puritan in my attitude towards Art. I am as fond of fine music and handsome building as Milton was, or Cromwell, or Bunyan; but if I found that they were becoming the instruments of a systematic idolatry of sensuousness, I would hold it good statesmanship to blow every cathedral in the world to pieces with dynamite, organ and all, without the least heed to the screams of the art critics and cultured voluptuaries. And when I see that the nineteenth century has crowned the idolatry of Art with the deification of Love, so that every poet is supposed to have pierced to the holy of holies when he

has announced that Love is the Supreme, or the Enough, or the All, I feel that Art was safer in the hands of the most fanatical of Cromwell's major-generals than it will be if ever it gets into mine. The pleasures of the senses I can sympathize with and share; but the substitution of sensuous ecstasy for intellectual activity and honesty is the very devil. *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. xx.

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The Romantic Attitude

THE lot of the man who sees life truly and thinks about it romantically is Despair. How well we know the cries of that despair! *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. xxviii.

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Autobiography

ALL autobiographies are lies. I do not mean unconscious, unintentional lies: I mean deliberate lies. No man is bad enough to tell the truth about himself during his lifetime, involving, as it must, the truth about his

family and friends and colleagues. And no man is good enough to tell the truth to posterity in a document which he suppresses until there is nobody left alive to contradict him.

In the Days of my Youth. *M.A.P.*, 17th September 1898, p. 324.

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Autres Temps Autres Mœurs

THE disloyalty of Hampden and of Washington; the revolting immorality of Luther in not only marrying when he was a priest, but actually marrying a nun; the heterodoxy of Galileo; the shocking blasphemies and sacrileges of Mahomet against the idols whom he dethroned to make way for his conception of one god; and the still more startling blasphemy of Jesus when he declared God to be the son of man and himself to be the son of God, are all examples of shocking immoralities (every immorality shocks somebody) the suppression and extinction of which would have been more

disastrous than the utmost mischief that can be conceived as ensuing from the toleration of vice. *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet*, p. 348.

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Beethoven

BEETHOVEN was the first man who used music with absolute integrity as the expression of his own emotional life. Others had shewn how it could be done—had done it themselves as a curiosity of their art in rare, self-indulgent, *unprofessional* moments—but Beethoven made this, and nothing else, his business. Stupendous as the resultant difference was between his music and any other ever heard in the world before his time, the distinction is not clearly apprehended to this day, because there was nothing new in the musical expression of emotion: every progression in Bach is sanctified by emotion; and Mozart's subtlety, delicacy, and exquisite tender touch and noble feeling were the despair of all the musical world. But Bach's

theme was not himself, but his religion; and Mozart was always the dramatist and story-teller, making the men and women of his imagination speak, and dramatizing even the instruments in his orchestra, so that you know their very sex the moment their voices reach you. Haydn really came nearer to Beethoven, for he is neither the praiser of God nor the dramatist, but, always within the limits of good manners and of his primary function as a purveyor of formal decorative music, a man of moods. This is how he created the symphony and put it ready-made into Beethoven's hand. The revolutionary giant at once seized it, and, throwing supernatural religion, conventional good manners, dramatic fiction, and all external standards and objects into the lumber room, took his own humanity as the material of his music, and expressed it all without compromise, from his roughest jocularity to his holiest aspiration after what purely hu-

man reign of intense life—of Freude—when

> Alle Menschen werden Brüder
> Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

In thus fearlessly expressing himself, he has, by his common humanity, expressed us as well, and shewn us how beautifully, how strongly, how trustworthily we can build with our own real selves. This is what is proved by the immense superiority of the Beethoven symphony to any oratorio or opera. *The Saturday Review*, 14th November 1896.

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The Bible

LIKE all highly developed literatures, the Bible contains a great deal of sensational fiction, imagined with intense vividness, appealing to the most susceptible passions, and narrated with a force which the ordinary man is quite unable to resist. Perhaps only an expert can thoroughly appreciate the power with which a story well told,

or an assertion well made, takes possession of a mind not specially trained to criticize it. Try to imagine all that is most powerful in English literature bound into one volume, and offered to a comparatively barbarous race as an instrument of civilization invested with supernatural authority! Indeed, let us leave what we call barbarous races out of the question, and suppose it offered to the English nation on the same assumptions as to its nature and authority which the children in our popular schools are led to make to-day concerning the Bible under the School Board compromise! How much resistance would there be to the illusion created by the art of our great story-tellers? Who would dare to affirm that the men and women created by Chaucer, Shakespear, Bunyan, Fielding, Goldsmith, Scott and Dickens had never existed? Who could resist the force of conviction carried by the tremendous assertive power of Cobbett,

the gorgeous special-pleading of Ruskin, or the cogency of Sir Thomas More, or even Matthew Arnold? Above all, who could stand up against the inspiration and moral grandeur of our prophets and poets, from Langland to Blake and Shelley? The power of Scripture has not waned with the ages. We have no right to trick a child's instinctive sense of revelation and inspiration by such a surpassingly blasphemous pessimistic lie as that both have become extinct, and that the wretched world, like its dead moon, is living out its old age on a scanty remnant of spiritual energy, hoarded from thousands of years ago. And yet the whole question at stake in the School Board election was whether this lie should be told as a black lie or a white one. The stupid part of the business is that it is quite unnecessary to tell any lies at all. Why not teach children the realities of inspiration and revelation as they work daily through scribes

and lawgivers? It would, at all events, make better journalists and parish councillors of them. *The Saturday Review*, 27th November 1897.

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Books

THEODOTUS.[1] Cæsar: will you go down to posterity as a barbarous soldier too ignorant to know the value of books?

CÆSAR. Theodotus: I am an author myself; and I tell you it is better that the Egyptians should live their lives than dream them away with the help of books.

THEODOTUS [*kneeling, with genuine literary emotion: the passion of the pedant*] Cæsar: once in ten generations of men the world gains an immortal book.

CÆSAR [*inflexible*] If it did not flatter mankind, the common executioner would burn it.

THEODOTUS. Without history, death will lay you beside your meanest soldier.

[1] The library of Alexandria is in flames. Theodotus asks for soldiers to extinguish them.

CÆSAR. Death will do that in any case. I ask no better grave.
THEODOTUS. What is burning there is the memory of mankind.
CÆSAR. A shameful memory. Let it burn.
THEODOTUS [*wildly*] Will you destroy the past?
CÆSAR. Ay, and build the future with its ruins. *Cæsar and Cleopatra,* p. 132.

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Both Sides

THE way to get at the merits of a case is not to listen to the fool who imagines himself impartial, but to get it argued with reckless bias for and against. To understand a saint, you must hear the devil's advocate; and the same is true of the artist. *The Sanity of Art,* p. 4.

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Bringing the Accusation Home

THE reason why Shakespear and Molière are always well spoken of and recommended to the young is that their quarrel is really a quarrel with

God for not making men better. If they had quarrelled with a specified class of persons with incomes of four figures for not doing their work better, or for doing no work at all, they would be denounced as seditious, impious, and profligate corrupters of morality. *Three Plays by Brieux,* Preface, p. xvii.

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Bunyan, Shakespear and Heroism

PUT your Shakespearian hero and coward, Henry V. and Pistol or Parolles, beside Mr. Valiant and Mr. Fearing, and you have a sudden revelation of the abyss that lies between the fashionable author who could see nothing in the world but personal aims and the tragedy of their disappointment or the comedy of their incongruity, and the field preacher who achieved virtue and courage by identifying himself with the purpose of the world as he understood it. The contrast is enormous: Bunyan's coward stirs your blood more than Shakespear's hero, who actually leaves you cold and secretly hostile. You sud-

denly see that Shakespear, with all his flashes and divinations, never understood virtue and courage, never conceived how any man who was not a fool could, like Bunyan's hero, look back from the brink of the river of death over the strife and labor of his pilgrimage, and say " yet do I not repent me "; or, with the panache of a millionaire, bequeath " my sword to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it." This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. And also the only real tragedy in life is the being used by personally minded men for purposes which you recognize to be base. All the rest is at worst

mere misfortune or mortality: this alone is misery, slavery, hell on earth; and the revolt against it is the only force that offers a man's work to the poor artist, whom our personally minded rich people would so willingly employ as pandar, buffoon, beauty monger, sentimentalizer and the like. *Man and Superman,* pp. xxxi., xxxii.

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Children and Religious Teaching

OUR duty to our school-children is clear enough. Just as we teach them that the various races and classes and colors of men have such and such customs and laws and habits differing from our own, so we should teach them that there exist in the world divers creeds and observances, theories of morals, and views as to the origin and destiny of life and the moral sanctions of conduct. And we should add that these differences do not connote differences of what children call goodness and badness, and that quite as good men and women, and even (which they will,

perhaps, find it harder to believe) just as bad men and women, are to be found among "heathens" as among their own fathers and mothers. That is all we have any right to teach children about creeds nowadays. *The Daily News*, 25th August 1902.

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Christianity

THE problem being to make heroes out of cowards, we paper apostles and artist-magicians have succeeded only in giving cowards all the sensations of heroes whilst they tolerate every abomination, accept every plunder, and submit to every oppression. Christianity in making a merit of such submission, has marked only that depth in the abyss at which the very sense of shame is lost. The Christian has been like Dickens' doctor in the debtor's prison, who tells the newcomer of its ineffable peace and security: no duns; no tyrannical collectors of rates, taxes and rent; no importunate hopes nor exacting duties; nothing but the rest and safety

of having no further to fall. *Major Barbara*, p. 179.

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Christmas

COURAGE, friend! We all loathe Christmas; but it comes only once a year and is soon over. *Christmas Card.*

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Citizenship and Circumstances

IT is quite useless to declare that all men are born free if you deny that they are born good. Guarantee a man's goodness and his liberty will take care of itself. To guarantee his freedom on condition that you approve of his moral character is formally to abolish all freedom whatsoever, as every man's liberty is at the mercy of a moral indictment, which any fool can trump up against everyone who violates custom, whether as a prophet or as a rascal. This is the lesson Democracy has to learn before it can become anything but the most oppressive of all the priesthoods. *Major Barbara*, p. 187.

Every practicable man (and woman) is a potential scoundrel and a potential good citizen. What a man is depends on his character; but what he does, and what we think of what he does, depends on his circumstances. *Major Barbara*, p. 185.

Take the utmost care to get well born and well brought up. This means that your mother must have a good doctor. Be careful to go to a school where there is what they call a school clinic, where your nutrition and teeth and eyesight and other matters of importance to you will be attended to. Be particularly careful to have all this done at the expense of the nation, as otherwise it will not be done at all, the chances being about forty to one against your being able to pay for it directly yourself, even if you know how to set about it. Otherwise you will be what most people are at present: an unsound citizen of an unsound nation, without sense enough to

be ashamed or unhappy about it. *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. xcii.

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Conscience

JUST as the liar's punishment is, not in the least that he is not believed, but that he cannot believe any one else, so a guilty society can more easily be persuaded that any apparently innocent act is guilty than that any apparently guilty act is innocent. *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 2.

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Conventional Morality

BRITANNUS [*shocked*] Cæser: this is not proper.

THEODOTUS [*outraged*] How!

CÆSAR. Pardon him, Theodotus: he is a barbarian and thinks that the customs of his tribe and island are the laws of nature. *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, p. 119.

Surely the time is past for patience with writers who, having to choose between giving up life in despair and discarding the trumpery moral kitchen scales in which they try to weigh the universe,

superstitiously stick to the scales, and spend the rest of the lives they pretend to despise in breaking men's spirits. *Three Plays for Puritans,* p. xxviii.

The truth is, laws, religions, creeds, and systems of ethics, instead of making society better than its best unit, make it worse than its average unit, because they are never up to date. You will ask me: "Why have them at all?" I will tell you. They are made necessary, though we all secretly detest them, by the fact that the number of people who can think out a line of conduct for themselves even on one point is very small, and the number who can afford the time for it still smaller. Nobody can afford the time to do it on all points. The professional thinker may on occasion make his own morality and philosophy as the cobbler may make his own boots; but the ordinary man of business must buy at the shop, so to speak, and put up with what he finds on sale there,

whether it exactly suits him or not, because he can neither make a morality for himself nor do without one. *The Sanity of Art,* p. 46.

Remember, the objection to all progress is that it is immoral. *Correspondence.*

Bunyan's perception that righteousness is filthy rags, his scorn for Mr. Legality in the village of Morality, his defiance of the Church as the supplanter of religion, his insistence on courage as the virtue of virtues, his estimate of the career of the conventionally respectable and sensible Worldly Wiseman as no better at bottom than the life and death of Mr. Badman: all this, expressed by Bunyan in the terms of a tinker's theology, is what Nietzsche has expressed in terms of post-Darwinian, post-Schopenhauerian philosophy; Wagner in terms of polytheistic mythology; and Ibsen in terms of mid-nineteenth century Parisian dramaturgy. Nothing is new in these matters except their novelties: for

instance, it is a novelty to call Justification by Faith "Wille," and Justification by Works "Vorstellung." The sole use of the novelty is that you and I buy and read Schopenhauer's treatise on Will and Representation when we should not dream of buying a set of sermons on Faith versus Works. At bottom the controversy is the same, and the dramatic results are the same. Bunyan makes no attempt to present his pilgrims as more sensible or better conducted than Mr. Worldly Wiseman. Mr. W. W.'s worst enemies, Mr. Embezzler, Mr. Never-go-to-Church-on-Sunday, Mr. Bad Form, Mr. Murderer, Mr. Burglar, Mr. Correspondent, Mr. Blackmailer, Mr. Cad, Mr. Drunkard, Mr. Labor Agitator and so forth, can read the Pilgrim's Progress without finding a word said against them; whereas the respectable people who snub them and put them in prison, such as Mr. W. W. himself and his young friend Civility; Formalist and Hypoc-

risy; Wildhead, Inconsiderate, and Pragmatick (who were clearly young university men of good family and high feeding); that brisk lad Ignorance, Talkative, By-Ends of Fairspeech and his mother-in-law Lady Feigning, and other reputable gentlemen and citizens, catch it very severely. Even Little Faith, though he gets to heaven at last, is given to understand that it served him right to be mobbed by the brothers Faint Heart, Mistrust, and Guilt, all three recognized members of respectable society and veritable pillars of the law. The whole allegory is a consistent attack on morality and respectability, without a word that one can remember against vice and crime. Exactly what is complained of in Nietzsche and Ibsen, is it not? *Man and Superman,* pp. xxxii., xxxiii.

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Courage

AND now, suppose you had done all this—suppose you had come safely out with that letter in your hand, know-

ing that when the hour came, your fear had tightened, not your heart, but your grip of your own purpose—that it had ceased to be fear, and had become strength, penetration, vigilance, iron resolution—how would you answer then if you were asked whether you were a coward? *The Man of Destiny,* p. 186.

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Cowardice

SUCH abominations as the Inquisition and the Vaccination Acts are possible only in the famine years of the soul, when the great vital dogmas of honor, liberty, courage, the kinship of all life, faith that the unknown is greater than the known and is only the As Yet Unknown, and resolution to find a manly highway to it, have been forgotten in a paroxysm of littleness and terror in which nothing is active except concupiscence and the fear of death, playing on which any trader can filch a fortune, any blackguard gratify his cruelty, and any tyrant make us his slaves. *The Doctor's Dilemma,* p. xc.

Buffer States at one end of the scale, dog muzzles at the other; between, the whole gamut of human cowardice, with "l'honneur de l'armée" and "our gallant Tommies" for keynote. And yet this poor trembling creature, Man, cannot rest or retreat, and must brag and dare—must even seek concrete danger as a relief from superstitious fear, just as men sometimes commit suicide to escape from the dread of death.

Civilization and the Soldier. *The Humane Review,* January 1901, p. 304.

The Criminal Law

B. B. But is he to be allowed to defy the criminal law of the land?

SIR PATRICK. The criminal law is no use to decent people. It only helps blackguards to blackmail their families. What are we family doctors doing half our time but conspiring with the family solicitor to keep some rascal out of jail and some family out of disgrace?

B. B. But at least it will punish him.

SIR PATRICK. Oh yes: itll punish him. Itll punish not only him but everybody connected with him, innocent and guilty alike. Itll throw his board and lodging on our rates and taxes for a couple of years, and then turn him loose on us a more dangerous blackguard than ever. Itll put the girl in prison and ruin her; itll lay his wife's life waste. You may put the criminal law out of your head once for all: it's only fit for fools and savages.

The Doctor's Dilemma, p. 72.

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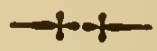
Criticism

IF you are clever enough to construct one of those dolls which close their eyes when you lay them on their backs, and speak plaintively when you nip them in the epigastric region, any imaginative little girl will explain to you at great length and in minute detail how the doll got tired and sleepy, and what it means by the squeak. The most popular dramatic criticisms of to-day are stories of dolls, prettily invented and touchingly

told. And when you give the critic a woman to criticize instead of a doll, and scenes from real life instead of turns of the stageland kaleidoscope to consider, he protests that you are confronting him with the morbid, the unmanageable, the diseased.
The Saturday Review, 20th July 1895.

Criticism may be pardoned for every mistake except that of not knowing a man of rank in literature when it meets one. *The Saturday Review*, 30th January 1897.



The Crows that Follow the Plough

AFTER Shakespear, the dramatists were in the position of Spohr after Mozart. A ravishing secular art had been opened up to them, and was refining their senses and ennobling their romantic illusions and enthusiasms instead of merely stirring up their basest passions. Cultivated lovers of the beauties of Shakespear's art—true amateurs, in fact—took the place of the Marlovian

crew. Such amateurs, let loose in a field newly reaped by a great master, have always been able to glean some dropped ears, and even to raise a brief aftermath. In this way the world has gained many charming and fanciful, though not really original, works of art —blank verse dramas after Shakespear, rhetorical frescces after Raphael, fugues after Bach, operas after Mozart, symphonies after Beethoven, and so on. This, I take it, is the distinction between Marlowe and Company and the firm of Beaumont and Fletcher. The pair wrote a good deal that was pretty disgraceful; but at all events they had been educated out of the possibility of writing Titus Andronicus. They had no depth, no conviction, no religious or philosophic basis, no real power or seriousness— Shakespear himself was a poor master in such matters—but they were dainty romantic poets, and really humorous character-sketchers in Shakespear's popular style: that is, they neither knew nor

cared anything about human psychology, but they could mimic the tricks and manners of their neighbors, especially the vulgarer ones, in a highly entertaining way. *The Saturday Review,* 19th February 1898.

Cruelty

LET us not shrink from the fact that cruelty is one of the primitive pleasures of mankind, and that the detection of its Protean disguises as law, education, medicine, discipline, sport and so forth, is one of the most difficult of the unending tasks of the legislator.

The Doctor's Dilemma, p. xliv.

Democracy

NERO was popular with the people: his despotism reached them only in the shape of splendid entertainments. His government was so unrepresentative, so undemocratic, that it was no government at all: the moment the people immediately about Nero had the sense to tell him that if he did not cut his own

throat they would save him the trouble, he had to obey like the meanest gladiator. To attain real power, he should have made himself the keystone of an oligarchy. To attain extensive power that oligarchy would have had to make itself the keystone of a democracy. Let me put this evolutionary process in blunter terms. An assassin may be feared and dreaded; but he can enjoy neither power nor safety. To escape from this position he associates other assassins with him and becomes a brigand. To make brigandage pay, it is soon necessary to resort to blackmail, and protect travellers who pay for protection. Thus the brigands, with the worst possible intentions, find themselves transformed into a police force. At last they become regular policemen as poachers become gamekeepers. At which point their power reaches its maximum. Hence the paradox that Democracy represents the extreme of possible State tyranny. *Unpublished.*

Democracy is really only an arrangement by which the whole people are given a certain share in the control of the government. It has never been proved that this is ideally the best arrangement: it became necessary because the people willed to have it; and it has been made effective only to the very limited extent short of which the dissatisfaction of the majority would have taken the form of actual violence. Now when men had to submit to kings, they consoled themselves by making it an article of faith that the king was always right—idealized him as a Pope, in fact. In the same way we who have to submit to majorities set up Voltaire's pope, "Monsieur Tout-le-monde," and make it blasphemy against Democracy to deny that the majority is always right, although that, as Ibsen says, is a lie. It is a scientific fact that the majority, however eager it may be for the reform of old abuses, is always wrong in its opinion of new developments, or rather is al-

ways unfit for them (for it can hardly be said to be wrong in opposing developments for which it is not yet fit). The pioneer is a tiny minority for the force he heads; and so, though it is easy to be in a minority and yet be wrong, it is absolutely impossible to be in the majority and yet be right as to the newest social prospects. We should never progress at all if it were possible for each of us to stand still on democratic principles until we saw whither all the rest were moving, as our statesmen declare themselves bound to do when they are called upon to lead. Whatever clatter we may make for a time with our filing through feudal serf collars and kicking off rusty capitalistic fetters, we shall never march a step forward except at the heels of "the strongest man, he who is able to stand alone" and to turn his back on "the damned compact Liberal majority." All of which is no disparagement of adult suffrage, payment of members, annual par-

liaments and so on, but simply a wholesome reduction of them to their real place in the social economy as pure machinery—machinery which has absolutely no principles except the principles of mechanics, and no motive power in itself whatsoever. The idealization of public organizations is as dangerous as that of kings or priests. We need to be reminded that though there is in the world a vast number of buildings in which a certain ritual is conducted before crowds called congregations by a functionary called a priest, who is subject to a central council controlling all such functionaries on a few points, there is not therefore any such thing in reality as the ideal Catholic Church, nor ever was, nor ever will be. There may, too, be a highly elaborate organization of public affairs; but there is no such thing as the ideal State. All abstractions invested with collective consciousness or collective authority, set above the individual, and exacting duty from

him on pretence of acting or thinking with greater validity than he, are man-eating idols red with human sacrifices. *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, pp. 97, 98, 99.

We must either breed political capacity or be ruined by Democracy, which was forced on us by the failure of the older alternatives. Yet if Despotism failed only for want of a capable benevolent despot, what chance has Democracy, which requires a whole population of capable voters: that is, of political critics who, if they cannot govern in person for lack of spare energy or specific talent for administration, can at least recognize and appreciate capacity and benevolence in others, and so govern through capably benevolent representatives? Where are such voters to be found to-day? Nowhere. Promiscuous breeding has produced a weakness of character that is too timid to face the full stringency of a thoroughly

competitive struggle for existence and too lazy and petty to organize the commonwealth co-operatively. Being cowards, we defeat natural selection under cover of philanthropy: being sluggards, we neglect artificial selection under cover of delicacy and morality.

Man and Superman, p. xxiv.

Real democracy is impossible without public opinion. And in our system the difficulty is not, as we so often say, that public opinion is not enlightened. The difficulty is that public opinion does not exist. There is literally no such thing. Opinion means a view of the world; and a view of the world means an income. *Unpublished.*

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Democracy and Justice

THERE is only one condition on which a man can do justice between two litigants, and that is that he shall have no interest in common with either of them, whereas it is only by having every interest in common with both of

them that he can govern them tolerably. The indispensable preliminary to Democracy is the representation of every interest: the indispensable preliminary to justice is the elimination of every interest.

John Bull's Other Island, p. xxvii.

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The Devil's Friends

DON JUAN [*to the Devil*] Pooh! why should I be civil to them or to you? In this Palace of Lies a truth or two will not hurt you. Your friends are all the dullest dogs I know. They are not beautiful: they are only decorated. They are not clean: they are only shaved and starched. They are not dignified: they are only fashionably dressed. They are not educated: they are only college passmen. They are not religious: they are only pewrenters. They are not moral: they are only conventional. They are not virtuous: they are only cowardly. They are not even vicious: they are only "frail." They are not artistic: they are only lascivious.

They are not prosperous: they are only rich. They are not loyal, they are only servile; not dutiful, only sheepish; not public spirited, only patriotic; not courageous, only quarrelsome; not determined, only obstinate; not masterful, only domineering; not self-controlled, only obtuse; not self-respecting, only vain; not kind, only sentimental; not social, only gregarious; not considerate, only polite; not intelligent, only opinionated; not progressive, only factious; not imaginative, only superstitious; not just, only vindictive; not generous, only propitiatory; not disciplined, only cowed; and not truthful at all—liars every one of them, to the very backbone of their souls. *Man and Superman*, p. 130.

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Discipline

I SAY that certain things are to be done; but I dont order anybody to do them. I dont say, mind you, that there is no ordering about and snubbing and even bullying. The men snub the

boys and order them about; the carmen snub the sweepers; the artisans snub the unskilled laborers; the foremen drive and bully both the laborers and artisans; the assistant engineers find fault with the foremen; the chief engineers drop on the assistants; the departmental managers worry the chiefs; and the clerks have tall hats and hymnbooks and keep up the social tone by refusing to associate on equal terms with anybody. The result is a colossal profit, which comes to me. *Major Barbara*, p. 283.

According to the disciplinarian theory, the captain of a cruiser ought to be the most absolute autocrat, and the secretary of a trade-union the most abject slave in England. As a matter of fact it is the captain who is the slave and the secretary who is the autocrat.

Correspondence.

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Discriminations

MARCHBANKS. Do you think that the things people make fools

of themselves about are any less real and true than the things they behave sensibly about? *Candida*, p. 108.

Compassion is the fellow-feeling of the unsound. *Man and Superman*, p. 243.

He who confuses political liberty with freedom and political equality with similarity has never thought for five minutes about either.
Man and Superman, p. 229.

Any fool can scoff. The serious matter is which side you scoff at. Scoffing at pretentious dufferdom is a public duty: scoffing at an advancing torchbearer is a deadly sin. The men who praised Shakespear in my time were mostly the men who would have stoned him had they been his contemporaries. To praise him saved them the trouble of thinking; got them the credit of correct and profound opinions; and enabled them to pass as men of taste when they explained that Ibsen was an obscene dullard. To

expose these humbugs and to rescue the real Shakespear from them, it was necessary to shatter their idol. It has taken the iconoclasm of three generations of Bible smashers to restore Hebrew literature to us, after three hundred years of regarding the volume into which it was bound as a fetish and a talisman; and it will take as many generations of Shakespear smashers before we can read the plays of Shakespear with as free minds as we read The Nation.

The Nation, 2nd April 1910.

When a man wants to murder a tiger he calls it sport: when the tiger wants to murder him he calls it ferocity. The distinction between Crime and Justice is no greater.

Man and Superman, p. 232.

Go on to Florence and try San Lorenzo, a really noble church (which the Milan Cathedral is not), Brunelleschi's masterpiece. You cannot but admire its intellectual command of form, its unaf-

fected dignity, its power and accomplishment, its masterly combination of simplicity and homogeneity of plan with elegance and variety of detail: you are even touched by the retention of that part of the beauty of the older time which was perceptible to the Renascent intellect before its weaning from heavenly food had been followed by starvation. You understand the deep and serious respect which Michael Angelo had for Brunelleschi—why he said "I can do different work, but not better." But a few minutes' walk to Santa Maria Novella or Santa Croce, or a turn in the steamtram to San Miniato, will bring you to churches built a century or two earlier: and you have only to cross their thresholds to feel, almost before you have smelt the incense, the difference between a church built to the pride and glory of God (not to mention the Medici) and one built as a sanctuary shielded by God's presence from pride and glory and all the other burdens of life. In San

Lorenzo up goes your head—every isolating advantage you have of talent, power or rank asserts itself with thrilling poignancy. In the older churches you forget yourself, and are the equal of the beggar at the door, standing on ground made holy by that labor in which we have discovered the reality of prayer. On Going to Church. *The Savoy,* January 1896, pp. 19, 20.

What is wrong with priests and popes is that instead of being apostles and saints, they are nothing but empirics who say "I know" instead of "I am learning," and pray for credulity and inertia as wise men pray for scepticism and activity. *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. xc.

An Englishman never asks what he is doing or why he is doing it. He prefers not to know, as he suspects that whatever it is, it is something wrong. The Scotchman, nurtured on the Shorter Catechism, is able to use his brains, and

therefore likes using them. He attacks the problem of life with an appetite. The Irishman, on the other hand, knows what he is doing without any study of the subject whatever. The result is that he often gets there before the reflective Scotchman or the recalcitrant Englishman. Life, Literature and Political Economy. *Clare Market Review*, January 1906, p. 31.

SCHUTZMACHER. When an Englishman borrows, all he knows or cares is that he wants money; and he'll sign anything to get it, without in the least understanding it, or intending to carry out the agreement if it turns out badly for him. In fact he thinks you a cad if you ask him to carry it out under such circumstances. Just like the Merchant of Venice, you know. But if a Jew makes an agreement, he means to keep it and expects you to keep it. If he wants money for a time, he borrows it and knows he must pay it at the end of the time.

If he knows he can't pay, he begs it as a gift. *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. 51.

UNDERSHAFT. You have learnt something. That always feels at first as if you had lost something.

Major Barbara, p. 284.

UNDERSHAFT [*with grave compassion*] You see, my dear, it is only the big men who can be treated as children.

Major Barbara, p. 277.

An Englishman reading Cæsar's books would say that Cæsar was a man of great common sense and good taste, meaning thereby a man without originality or moral courage.

Three Plays for Puritans, p. 205.

Originality gives a man an air of frankness, generosity and magnanimity by enabling him to estimate the value of truth, money, or success in any particular instance quite independently of convention and moral generalization. He

therefore will not, in the ordinary Treasury Bench fashion, tell a lie which everybody knows to be a lie (and consequently expects him as a matter of good taste to tell). His lies are not found out: they pass for candors. He understands the paradox of money, and gives it away when he can get most for it; in other words, when its value is least, which is just when a common man tries hardest to get it. He knows that the real moment of success is not the moment apparent to the crowd. Hence, in order to produce an impression of complete disinterestedness and magnanimity, he has only to act with entire selfishness, and this is perhaps the only sense in which a man can be said to be *naturally* great.

It is in this sense that I have represented Cæsar as great. Having virtue, he has no need of goodness. He is neither forgiving, frank, nor generous, because a man who is too great to resent has nothing to forgive; a man who says

things that other people are afraid to say need be no more frank than Bismarck was; and there is no generosity in giving things you do not want to people of whom you intend to make use. This distinction between virtue and goodness is not understood in England: hence the poverty of our drama in heroes. Our stage attempts at them are mere goody-goodies. Goodness, in its popular British sense of self-denial, implies that man is vicious by nature, and that supreme goodness is supreme martyrdom. Not sharing that pious opinion, I have not given countenance to it in any of my plays. In this I follow the precedent of the ancient myths, which represent the hero as vanquishing his enemies, not in fair fight, but with enchanted sword, superequine horse and magic invulnerability, the possession of which, from the vulgar moralistic point of view, robs his exploits of any merit whatever.

Three Plays for Puritans, pp. 206, 207.

CENTURION [*sulkily*] I do my duty. That is enough for me.

APOLLODORUS. Majesty: when a stupid man is doing something he is ashamed of, he always declares that it is his duty. *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, p. 144.

What the world calls originality is only an unaccustomed method of tickling it. *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. xxxvi.

JOHNNY. The Governor's a wonderful man; but he's not quite all there, you know. If you notice, he's different from me; and whatever my failings may be, I'm a sane man. Erratic: thats what he is. And the danger is that some day he'll give the whole show away.

LORD SUMMERHAYS. Giving the show away is a method like any other method. Keeping it to yourself is only another method. I should keep an open mind about it.

JOHNNY. Has it ever occurred to you that a man with an open mind must be a bit of a scoundrel? If you ask me,

I like a man who makes up his mind once for all as to whats right and whats wrong and then sticks to it. At all events you know where to have him.

LORD SUMMERHAYS. That may not be his object.

BENTLEY. He may want to have you, old chap.

JOHNNY. Well, let him. If a member of my club wants to steal my umbrella, he knows where to find it. If a man put up for the club who had an open mind on the subject of property in umbrellas, I should blackball him. An open mind is all very well in clever talky-talky; but in conduct and in business give me solid ground.

LORD SUMMERHAYS. Yes: the quicksands make life difficult. Still, there they are. It's no use pretending theyre rocks.

JOHNNY. I dont know. You can draw a line and make other chaps toe it. Thats what I call morality.

Misalliance (unpublished, 1912).

The test of a man or woman's breeding is how they behave in a quarrel. Anybody can behave well when things are going smoothly.

The Philanderer, p. 151.

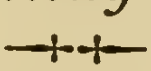
The effect of deterrents depends much less on their severity than on their certainty.

The Free Lance, 25th January 1902.

Divorce and Sacramental Marriage

MAMMON overreached himself when he imposed his doctrine of inalienable property on the Church under the guise of indissoluble marriage. For the Church tried to shelter this inhuman doctrine and flat contradiction of the gospel by claiming, and rightly claiming, that marriage is a sacrament. So it is; but that is exactly what makes divorce a duty when the marriage has lost the inward and spiritual grace of which the marriage ceremony is the outward and visible sign. In vain do bishops stoop to pick up the discarded arguments

of the atheists of fifty years ago by pleading that the words of Jesus were in an obscure Aramaic dialect, and were probably misunderstood, as Jesus, they think, could not have said anything a bishop would disapprove of. Unless they are prepared to add that the statement that those who take the sacrament with their lips but not with their hearts eat and drink their own damnation is also a mistranslation from the Aramaic, they are most solemnly bound to shield marriage from profanation, not merely by permitting divorce, but by making it compulsory in certain cases as the Chinese do. *Getting Married*, p. 195.



The Dramatist

LIFE as it occurs is senseless: a policeman may watch it and work in it for thirty years in the streets and courts of Paris without learning as much of it or from it as a child or a nun may learn from a single play by Brieux. For it is the business of Brieux to pick out the significant incidents from the chaos

of daily happenings, and arrange them so that their relation to one another becomes significant, thus changing us from bewildered spectators of a monstrous confusion to men intelligently conscious of the world and its destinies. This is the highest function that man can perform—the greatest work he can set his hand to; and this is why the great dramatists of the world, from Euripides and Aristophanes to Shakespear and Molière, and from them to Ibsen and Brieux, take that majestic and pontifical rank which seems so strangely above all the reasonable pretensions of mere strolling actors and theatrical authors. *Three Plays by Brieux*, Preface, p. xxv.

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Duty

WHAT, during all these overthrowings of things sacred and things infallible, has been happening to that pre-eminently sanctified thing, Duty? Evidently it cannot have come off scatheless. First there was man's duty to God,

with the priest as assessor. That was repudiated; and then came Man's duty to his neighbor, with Society as the assessor. Will this too be repudiated, and be succeeded by Man's duty to himself, assessed by himself? And if so, what will be the effect on the conception of Duty in the abstract? Let us see.

Duty arises at first, a gloomy tyranny, out of man's helplessness, his self-mistrust, in a word, his abstract fear. He personifies all that he abstractly fears as God, and straightway becomes the slave of his duty to God. He imposes that slavery fiercely on his children, threatening them with hell, and punishing them for their attempts to be happy. When, becoming bolder, he ceases to fear everything, and dares to love something, this duty of his to what he fears evolves into a sense of duty to what he loves. Sometimes he again personifies what he loves as God: and the God of Wrath becomes the God of Love; sometimes he at once becomes a humanitarian,

an altruist, acknowledging only his duty to his neighbor. This stage is correlative to the rationalist stage in the evolution of philosophy and the capitalist phase in the evolution of industry. But in it the emancipated slave of God falls under the dominion of Society, which, having just reached a phase in which all the love is ground out of it by the competitive struggle for money, remorselessly crushes him until, in due course of the further growth of his spirit or will, a sense at last arises in him of his duty to himself. And when this sense is fully grown, which it hardly is yet, the tyrrany of duty is broken; for now the man's God is himself; and he, self-satisfied at last, ceases to be selfish. The evangelist of this last step must therefore preach the repudiation of duty. This, to the unprepared of his generation, is indeed the wanton masterpiece of paradox. What! after all that has been said by men of noble life as to the secret of all right conduct being only

"Duty, duty, duty," is he to be told now that duty is the primal curse from which we must redeem ourselves before we can advance another step on the road along which, as we imagine—having forgotten the repudiations made by our fathers—duty and duty alone has brought us thus far? But why not? God was once the most sacred of our conceptions; and he had to be denied. Then Reason became the Infallible Pope, only to be deposed in turn. Is Duty more sacred than God or Reason?

Quintessence of Ibsenism, pp. 17, 18.

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Economic Independence

I BELIEVE that any society which desires to found itself on a high standard of integrity of character in its units should organize itself in such a fashion as to make it possible for all men and all women to maintain themselves in reasonable comfort by their industry without selling their affections and their convictions. *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant.* Vol. I. *Unpleasant*, p. xxvi.

The Economic Independence of Women

FAMILY life will never be decent, much less ennobling, until the central horror of the dependence of women on men is done away with. At present it reduces the difference between marriage and prostitution to the difference between Trade Unionism and unorganized casual labor: a huge difference, no doubt, as to order and comfort, but not a difference in kind.

Getting Married, p. 164.

Education

THE ruthless repression which we practise on our fellow-creatures whilst they are too small to defend themselves, ends in their reaching their full bodily growth in a hopelessly lamed and intimidated condition, unable to conceive of any forces in the world except physically coercive and socially conventional ones.

Exactly in proportion as Parliament consists of thoroughly schooled men, do we find it given to shuffling and prevarication, and convinced that the world can

only be held together by flogging, punishing, coercing and retaliating. And the exponents of this philosophy of cowardice are personally docile, abject to superior rank and royalty, horribly afraid to say, do, or think anything unless they see everybody else setting them the example, incapable of conceiving liberty and equality: in short, schoolboyish. That is, they are exactly what they have been educated to be from their weakest childhood; and they are everywhere beaten in character and energy by the men who, through the poverty, carelessness, or enlightenment of their parents, have more or less escaped education. Great communities are built by men who sign with a mark: they are wrecked by men who write Latin verses. Does Modern Education Ennoble? *Great Thoughts,* 7th October 1905, p. 6.

People are said not to care for education; and this is true enough; but they would care for it if they were confronted

daily with an undeniably superior efficiency in the most expensively educated classes. What they actually are confronted with need not be described here: suffice it to say that no rational being can be conceived as willing to be rated another threepence in the pound to secure some more of it. *Correspondence.*

LORD SUMMERHAYS. Reading is a dangerous amusement, Tarleton. I wish I could persuade some of your free library people of that.

TARLETON. Why, man, it's the beginning of education.

LORD SUMMERHAYS. On the contrary, it's the end of it. How can you dare teach a man to read until you have taught him everything else first?

Misalliance (unpublished, 1912).

And since what we call education and culture is for the most part nothing but the substitution of reading for experience, of literature for life, of the obsolete fictitious for the contemporary real,

education, as you no doubt observed at Oxford, destroys, by supplantation, every mind that is not strong enough to see through the imposture and to use the great Masters of Arts as what they really are and no more: that is, patentees of highly questionable methods of thinking, and manufacturers of highly questionable, and for the majority but half valid representations of life.

Man and Superman, pp. xx., xxi.

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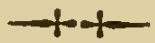
The Elocutionist

POWERFUL among the enemies of Shakespear are the commentator and the elocutionist: the commentator because, not knowing Shakespear's language, he sharpens his reasoning faculty to examine propositions advanced by an eminent lecturer from the Midlands, instead of sensitizing his artistic faculty to receive the impression of moods and inflexions of feeling conveyed by word-music; the elocutionist because he is a born fool, in which capacity, observing

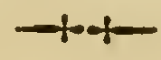
with pain that poets have a weakness for imparting to their dramatic dialogue a quality which he describes and deplores as "sing-song," he devotes his life to the art of breaking up verse in such a way as to make it sound like insanely pompous prose. The effect of this on Shakespear's earlier verse, which is full of the naive delight of pure oscillation, to be enjoyed as an Italian enjoys a barcarolle, or a child a swing, or a baby a rocking-cradle, is destructively stupid. In the later plays, where the barcarolle measure has evolved into much more varied and complex rhythms, it does not matter so much since the work is no longer simple enough for a fool to pick to pieces. But in every play from Love's Labour's Lost to Henry V. the elocutionist meddles simply as a murderer, and ought to be dealt with as such without benefit of clergy. To our young people studying for the stage I say, with all solemnity, learn how to pronounce the English alphabet clearly and beauti-

fully from some person who is at once an artist and a phonetic expert. And then leave blank verse patiently alone until you have experienced emotion deep enough to crave for poetic expression, at which point verse will seem an absolutely natural and real form of speech to you. Meanwhile, if any pedant, with an uncultivated heart and a theoretic ear, proposes to teach you to recite, send instantly for the police. *The Saturday Review*, 2nd February 1895.



The End and the Means

TO me the play is only the means, the end being the expression of feeling by the arts of the actor, the poet, the musician. Anything that makes this expression more vivid, whether it be versification, or an orchestra, or a deliberately artificial delivery of the lines, is so much to the good for me, even though it may destroy all the verisimilitude of the scene. *The Saturday Review*, 13th April 1895.



HOME life as we understand it is no more natural to us than a cage is natural to a cockatoo. Its grave danger to the nation lies in its narrow views, its unnaturally sustained and spitefully jealous concupiscences, its petty tyrranies, its false social pretences, its endless grudges and squabbles, its sacrifice of the boy's future by setting him to earn money to help the family when he should be in training for his adult life (remember the boy Dickens and the blacking factory), and of the girl's chances by making her a slave to sick or selfish parents, its unnatural packing into little brick boxes of little parcels of humanity of ill-assorted ages, with the old scolding or beating the young for behaving like young people, and the young hating and thwarting the old for behaving like old people, and all the other ills, mentionable and unmentionable, that arise from excessive segregation. It sets these evils up as benefits and blessings representing the highest attainable

degree of honor and virtue, whilst any criticism of or revolt against them is savagely persecuted as the extremity of vice. The revolt, driven underground and exacerbated, produces debauchery veiled by hypocrisy, and overwhelming demand for licentious theatrical entertainments which no censorship can stem, and, worst of all, a confusion of virtue with the mere morality that steals its name until the real thing is loathed because the imposture is loathsome.

Getting Married, pp. 132, 133.

If on any night at the busiest part of the theatrical season in London the audiences were cordoned by the police and examined individually as to their views on the subject, there would probably not be a single house-owning native among them who would not conceive a visit to the theatre, or indeed to any public assembly, artistic or political, as an exceptional way of spending an evening, the normal English way being to

sit in separate families in separate houses, each person silently occupied with a book, a paper, or a game of halma, cut off equally from the blessings of society and solitude. You may make the acquaintance of a thousand streets of middle-class English families without coming on a trace of any consciousness of citizenship, or any artistic cultivation of the senses. The condition of the men is bad enough, in spite of their daily escape into the city, because they carry the exclusive and unsocial habits of "the home" with them into the wider world of their business. Amiable and companionable enough by nature, they are, by home training, so incredibly ill-mannered, that not even their interest, as men of business in welcoming a possible customer in every inquirer, can correct their habit of treating everybody who has not been "introduced" as a stranger and intruder. The women, who have not even the city to educate them, are much worse: they are positively un-

fit for civilized intercourse—graceless, ignorant, narrow-minded to a quite appalling degree. *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant.* Vol. I. *Unpleasant,* pp. xvii., xviii.

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NAPOLEON. No Englishman is too low to have scruples: no Englishman is high enough to be free from their tyranny. But every Englishman is born with a certain miraculous power that makes him master of the world. When he wants a thing, he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who have got the thing he wants. Then he becomes irresistible. Like the aristocrat, he does what pleases him and grabs what he covets: like the shopkeeper, he pursues his purpose with the industry and steadfastness that come from strong religious conviction and

The Englishman

deep sense of moral responsibility. He is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude. As the great champion of freedom and national independence, he conquers and annexes half the world, and calls it Colonization. When he wants a new market for his adulterated Manchester goods, he sends a missionary to teach the natives the Gospel of Peace. The natives kill the missionary: he flies to arms in defence of Christianity; fights for it; conquers for it; and takes the market as a reward from heaven. In defence of his island shores, he puts a chaplain on board his ship; nails a flag with a cross on it to his top-gallant mast; and sails to the ends of the earth, sinking, burning and destroying all who dispute the empire of the seas with him. He boasts that a slave is free the moment his foot touches British soil; and he sells the children of his poor at six years of age to work under the lash in his factories for sixteen hours a day. He makes two revolutions, and then de-

clares war on our one in the name of law and order. There is nothing so bad or so good that you will not find Englishmen doing it; but you will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles; he bullies you on manly principles; he supports his king on loyal principles and cuts off his king's head on republican principles. His watchword is always Duty; and he never forgets that the nation which lets its duty get on the opposite side to its interest is lost. *The Man of Destiny*, pp. 212, 213.

Englishmen . . . always lean sincerely to virtue's side as long as it costs them nothing either in money or in thought. They feel deeply the injustice of foreigners, who allow them no credit for this conditional high-mindedness.

Man and Superman, p. 216.

Englishmen believe in nothing but the soldier, who is a positive nuisance, the gentleman, who is a comparative nuisance, and the lady, who is a superlative nuisance. And so I think the world will tire at last of the Englishman's stupidity, and send him back to his hovel, like the fisherman in the fairy tale who wanted to be lord of the sun and moon because his simpler virtues had been rewarded by a success or two. Civilization and the Soldier. *The Humane Review,* January 1901, p. 314.

It seems impossible to root out of an Englishman's mind the notion that vice is delightful, and that abstention from it is privation. *The Author's Apology. Mrs. Warren's Profession,* p. 29.

DOYLE. A caterpillar when it gets into a tree, instinctively makes itself look exactly like a leaf; so that both its enemies and its prey may mistake it for one and think it not worth bothering about. The world is as full of fools

as a tree is full of leaves. Well, the Englishman does what the caterpillar does. He instinctively makes himself look like a fool, and eats up all the real fools at his ease while his enemies let him alone and laugh at him for being a fool like the rest. Oh, nature is cunning, cunning!

John Bull's Other Island, p. 25.

CETEWAYO. Are these anæmic dogs the English people?

LUCIAN. Mislike us not for our complexions,
The pallid liveries of the pall of smoke
Belched by the mighty chimneys of our factories,
And by the million patent kitchen ranges
Of happy English homes.

The Admirable Bashville, p. 37.

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The Englishman and the Comic Spirit

THE Englishman is the most successful man in the world simply because he values success—meaning money and social precedence—more than any-

thing else, especially more than fine art, his attitude towards which, culture-affectation apart, is one of half diffident, half contemptuous curiosity; and of course more than clear-headedness, spiritual insight, truth, justice and so forth. It is precisely this unscrupulousness and singleness of purpose that constitutes the Englishman's pre-eminent "common sense"; and this sort of common sense, I submit to Mr. Meredith, is not only not "the basis of the comic," but actually makes comedy impossible, because it would not seem like common sense at all if it were not self-satisfiedly unconscious of its moral and intellectual bluntness, whereas the function of comedy is to dispel such unconsciousness by turning the searchlight of the keenest moral and intellectual analysis right on to it. Now the Frenchman, the Irishman, the American, the ancient Greek, is disabled from this true British common sense by intellectual virtuosity, leading to a love of accurate and complete consciousness

of things—of intellectual mastery of them. This produces a positive enjoyment of disillusion (the most dreaded and hated of calamities in England) and consequently a love of comedy (the fine art of disillusion) deep enough to make huge sacrifices of dearly idealized institutions to it. Thus, in France, Molière was allowed to destroy the Marquises. In England he could not have shaken even such titles as the accidental sheriff's knighthood of the late Sir Augustus Harris. And yet the Englishman thinks himself much more independent, level-headed, and genuinely republican than the Frenchman—not without good superficial reasons; for nations with the genius of comedy often carry all the snobbish ambitions and idealist enthusiasms of the Englishman to an extreme which the Englishman himself laughs at. But they sacrifice them to comedy, to which the Englishman sacrifices nothing; so that, in the upshot, aristocracies, thrones and churches go by the board

at the attack of comedy among our devotedly conventional, loyal and fanatical next door neighbors, whilst we, having absolutely no disinterested regard for such institutions, draw a few of their sharpest teeth, and then maintain them determinedly as part of the machinery of worldly success.

The Englishman prides himself on this anti-comedic common sense of his as at least eminently practical. As a matter of fact, it is just as often as not most pigheadedly unpractical. For example, electric telegraphy, telephony and traction are invented, and establish themselves as necessities of civilized life. The unpractical foreigner recognizes the fact, and takes the obvious step of putting up poles in his streets to carry wires. This expedient never occurs to the Briton. He wastes leagues of wire and does unheard-of damage to property by tying his wires and posts to such chimney stacks as he can beguile householders into letting him have access to. Finally,

when it comes to electric traction, and the housetops are out of the question, he suddenly comes out in the novel character of an amateur in urban picturesqueness, and declares that the necessary cable apparatus would spoil the appearance of our streets. The streets of Nuremberg, the heights of Fiesole, may not be perceptibly the worse for these contrivances; but the beauty of Tottenham Court Road is too sacred to be so profaned: to its loveliness the strained bus-horse and his offal are the only accessories endurable by the beauty-loving Cockney eye. This is your common-sense Englishman. His helplessness in the face of electricity is typical of his helplessness in the face of everything else that lies outside the set of habits he calls his opinions and capacities. In the theatre he is the same. It is not common sense to laugh at your own prejudices: it is common sense to feel insulted when any one else laughs at them. Besides, the Englishman is a serious person: that is,

he is firmly persuaded that his prejudices and stupidities are the vital material of civilization, and that it is only by holding on to their moral prestige with the stiffest resolution that the world is saved from flying back into savagery and gorilladom, which he always conceives, in spite of natural history, as a condition of lawlessness and promiscuity, instead of, as it actually is, the extremity, long since grown unbearable, of his own notions of law and order, morality and conventional respectability. Thus he is a moralist, an ascetic, a Christian, a truth-teller and a plain dealer by profession and by conviction; and it is wholly against this conviction that, judged by his own canons, he finds himself in practice a great rogue, a liar, an unconscionable pirate, a grinder of the face of the poor, and a libertine. Mr. Meredith points out daintily that the cure for this self-treasonable confusion and darkness is Comedy, whose spirit overhead will "look humanely malign and cast an

oblique light on them, followed by volleys of silvery laughter." Yes, Mr. Meredith; but suppose the patients have "common sense" enough not to want to be cured! Suppose they realize the immense commercial advantage of keeping their ideal life and their practical business life in two separate conscience-tight compartments, which nothing but "the Comic Spirit" can knock into one! Suppose, therefore, they dread the Comic Spirit more than anything else in the world, shrinking from its "illumination," and considering its "silvery laughter" in execrable taste! Surely in doing so they are only carrying out the common-sense view, in which an encouragement and enjoyment of comedy must appear as silly and suicidal and "un-English" as the conduct of the man who sets fire to his own house for the sake of seeing the flying sparks, the red glow in the sky, the fantastic shadows on the walls, the excitement of the crowd, the gleaming charge of the engines, and

the dismay of the neighbors. No doubt the day will come when we shall deliberately burn a London street every day to keep our city up to date in health and handsomeness, with no more misgiving as to our common sense than we now have when sending our clothes to the laundry every week. When that day comes, perhaps comedy will be popular too; for, after all, the function of comedy, as Mr. Meredith after twenty years' further consideration is perhaps by this time ripe to admit, is nothing less than the destruction of old-established morals. Unfortunately, today such iconoclasm can be tolerated by our playgoing citizens only as a counsel of despair and pessimism. They can find a dreadful joy in it when it is done seriously, or even grimly and terribly as they understand Ibsen to be doing it; but that it should be done with levity, with silvery laughter like the crackling of thorns under a pot, is too scandalously wicked, too cynical, too heartlessly shocking to

be borne. Consequently our plays must either be exploitations of old-established morals or tragic challengings of the order of Nature. Reductions to absurdity, however logical; banterings, however kindly; irony, however delicate; merriment, however silvery, are out of the question in matters of morality, except among men with a natural appetite for comedy which must be satisfied at all costs and hazards: that is to say, *not* among the English playgoing public, which positively dislikes comedy.

No doubt it is patriotically indulgent of Mr. Meredith to say that "Our English school has not clearly imagined society," and that "of the mind hovering above congregated men and women it has imagined nothing." But is he quite sure that the audiences of our English school do not know too much about society and "congregated men and women" to encourage any exposures from "the vigilant Comic," with its "thoughtful laughter," its "oblique il-

lumination," and the rest of it? May it not occur to the purchasers of half-guinea stalls that it is bad enough to have to put up with the pryings of Factory Inspectors, Public Analysts, County Council Inspectors, Chartered Accountants and the like, without admitting this Comic Spirit to look into still more delicate matters? Is it clear that the Comic Spirit would break into silvery laughter if it saw all that the nineteenth century has to show it beneath the veneer? There is Ibsen, for instance: he is not lacking, one judges, in the Comic Spirit; yet his laughter does not sound very silvery, does it? No: if this were an age for comedies, Mr. Meredith would have been asked for one before this. How would a comedy from him be relished, I wonder, by the people who wanted to have the revisers of the Authorized Version of the Bible prosecuted for blasphemy because they corrected as many of its mistranslations as they dared, and who reviled Froude for not sup-

pressing Carlyle's diary and writing a fictitious biography of him, instead of letting out the truth? Comedy, indeed! I drop the subject with a hollow laugh. *Saturday Review*, 27th March 1897.

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Equality

EQUALITY is essential to good breeding; and equality, as all economists know, is incompatible with property. *Man and Superman*, p. 186.

I am not bound to keep my temper with an imposture so outrageous, so abjectly sycophantic, as the pretence that the existing inequalities of income correspond to and are produced by moral and physical inferiorities and superiorities —that Barnato was five million times as great and good a man as William Blake, and committed suicide because he lost two-fifths of his superiority; that the life of Lord Anglesey has been on a far higher plane than that of John Ruskin; that Mademoiselle Liane de Pougy has been raised by her successful sugar specu-

lation to moral heights never attained by Florence Nightingale; and that an arrangement to establish economic equality between them by duly adjusted pensions would be impossible. I say that no sane person can be expected to treat such impudent follies with patience, much less with respect.

The evil resulting from the existing unequal distribution of wealth is so enormous, so incalculably greater than any other evil, actual or conceivable, on the face of the earth, that it is our first duty to alter it into an equal distribution. The chief physical agent needed for the change is a sufficiency of cannon. The chief moral agent a sufficiency of character, which seems to be the difficulty so far, the nation exhibiting, instead of those diversities of opinion and capacity which so impress The Pall Mall Gazette, a dead level of baseness and tameness which makes it possible to drive men in flocks to fight over the question of the proprietorship of other countries

before we have dared even to raise the question of the proprietorship of our own.

The Daily News, 8th December 1904.

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The Personal Factor

IF you lived in London, where the whole system is one of false good-fellowship, and you may know a man for twenty years without finding out that he hates you like poison, you would soon have your eyes opened. There we do unkind things in a kind way: we say bitter things in a sweet voice: we always give our friends chloroform when we tear them to pieces. But think of the other side of it! Think of the people who do kind things in an unkind way—people whose touch hurts, whose voices jar, whose tempers play them false, who wound and worry the people they love in the very act of trying to conciliate them, and yet who need affection as much as the rest of us. *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant.* Vol. II. *Pleasant*, pp. 309, 310.

BARRY SULLIVAN

BARRY SULLIVAN was a splendidly monstrous performer in his prime: there was hardly any part sufficiently heroic for him to be natural in it. He had deficiencies in his nature or rather blanks, but no weaknesses, because he had what people call no heart. Being a fine man, as proud as Lucifer, and gifted with an intense energy which had enabled him to cultivate himself physically to a superb degree, he was the very incarnation of the old individualistic, tyrannical conception of a great actor. By magnifying that conception to sublimity, he reduced it to absurdity. There were just two serious parts which he could play—Hamlet and Richelieu—the two loveless parts in the grand repertory. *The Saturday Review,* 14th December 1895.

DUSE

But in Duse you necessarily get the great school in its perfect integrity, be-

cause Duse without her genius would be a plain little woman of no use to any manager, whereas Miss Terry or Miss Achurch, if they had no more skill than can be acquired by any person of ordinary capacity in the course of a few years' experience, would always find a certain degree of favour as pretty leading ladies. Duse *with* her genius, is so fascinating that it is positively difficult to attend to the play instead of attending wholly to her. The extraordinary richness of her art can only be understood by those who have studied the process by which an actress is built up. You offer a part to a young lady who is an enthusiastic beginner. She reads it devoutly, and forms, say, half a dozen great ideas as to points which she will make. The difficulty then is to induce her to do nothing between these points; so that the play may be allowed at such moments to play itself. Probably when it comes to the point, these intervals will prove the only effective periods dur-

ing her performance, the points being ill chosen or awkwardly executed. The majority of actresses never get beyond learning not to invent new points for themselves, but rather to pick out in their parts the passages which admit of certain well worn and tried old points being reapplied. When they have learnt to make these points smoothly and to keep quiet between whiles with a graceful air of having good reasons for doing nothing, they are finished actresses. The great actress has a harder struggle. She goes on inventing her points and her business determinedly, constantly increasing the original half-dozen, and constantly executing them with greater force and smoothness. A time comes when she is always making points, and making them well; and this is the finishing point with some actresses. But with the greatest artists there soon commences an integration of the points into a continuous whole, at which stage the actress appears to make no points at all,

and to proceed in the most unstudied and "natural" way. This rare consummation Duse has reached. An attentive study of her Marguerite Gauthier, for instance, by a highly trained observer of such things, will bring to light how its apparently simple strokes are combinations of a whole series of strokes, separately conceived originally, and added one by one to the part, until finally, after many years of evolution, they have integrated into one single highly complex stroke. Take, as a very simple illustration, the business of Camille's tying up the flowers in the third act. It seems the most natural thing in the world; but it is really the final development of a highly evolved dance with the arms—even, when you watch it consciously, a rather prolonged and elaborate one. The strokes of character have grown up in just the same way. And this is the secret of the extraordinary interest of such acting. There are years of work, bodily and mental, be-

hind every instant of it—work, mind, not mere practice and habit, which is quite a different thing. It is the rarity of the gigantic energy needed to sustain this work which makes Duse so exceptional; for the work is in her case highly intellectual work, and so requires energy of a quality altogether superior to the mere head of steam needed to produce Bernhardtian explosions with the requisite regularity. With such high energy, mere personal fascination becomes a thing which the actress can put off and on like a garment. Sarah Bernhardt has nothing but her own charm, for the exhibition of which Sardou contrives love scenes—save the mark. Duse's own private charm has not yet been given to the public. She gives you Césarine's charm, Marguerite Gauthier's charm, the charm of La Locandiera, the charm, in short, belonging to the character she impersonates; and you are enthralled by its reality and delighted by the magical skill of the artist

without for a moment feeling any complicity either on your own part or hers in the passion represented. And with that clue to the consistency of supreme admiration for the artist with perfect respect for the woman—a combination so rare that some people doubt its possibility—I must leave discussion of the plays she has appeared in this week to my next article.—*The Saturday Review*, 8th June 1895.

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The Farcical Comedy

ONE of the strongest objections to the institution of monogamy is the existence of its offspring, the conventional farcical comedy. The old warning, "Beware how you kiss when you do not love," ought to be paraphrased on the playbills of all our lighter theatres as "Beware how you laugh when you do not enjoy." To laugh without sympathy is a ruinous abuse of a noble function; and the degredation of any race may be measured by the degree of their addiction to it. In its

subtler forms it is dying very hard: for instance, we find people who would not join in the laughter of a crowd of peasants at the village idiot, or tolerate the public flogging or pillorying of a criminal, booking seats to shout with laughter at a farcical comedy which is, at bottom, the same thing—namely, the deliberate indulgence of that horrible, derisive joy in humiliation and suffering which is the beastliest element in human nature. I make these portentous observations not by way of breaking a butterfly on a wheel, but in order to bring out with violent emphasis the distinction between the high and the base comedy of errors—between Pink Dominos and Twelfth Night; or, to illustrate from another art, between the caricatures of Leech or Gavarni and those which mark the last intolerable stages of the degradation of Ally Sloper (who in his original Ross-Duval days was not without his merits). To produce high art in the theatre, the author must create per-

sons whose fortunes we can follow as those of a friend or enemy: to produce base laughter, it is only necessary to turn human beings on to the stage as rats are turned into a pit, that they may be worried for the entertainment of the spectators. *The Saturday Review,* 9th May 1896.

Unless comedy touches me as well as amuses me, it leaves me with a sense of having wasted my evening. I go to the theatre to be moved to laughter, not to be tickled or bustled into it; and that is why, though I laugh as much as anybody at a farcical comedy, I am out of spirits before the end of the second act, and out of temper before the end of the third, my miserable mechanical laughter intensifying these symptoms at every outburst. If the public ever becomes intelligent enough to know when it is really enjoying itself and when it is not, there will be an end of farcical comedy. *The Saturday Review,* 23d February, 1895.

Formulas

LADY BRITOMART. In good society in England, Charles, men drivel at all ages by repeating silly formulas with an air of wisdom. Schoolboys make their own formulas out of slang, like you. When they reach your age, and get political private secretaryships and things of that sort, they drop slang and get their formulas out of The Spectator or The Times. You had better confine yourself to The Times. *Major Barbara*, p. 272.

The God of Fine Ladies

I KNOW that my "ignorant and inexperienced God" disgusts people who are accustomed to the best of everything. The old-fashioned gentleman who felt that God would not lightly damn a man of his quality has given place to the lady who declines to be saved by a deity who is not absolutely first-class in every particular. Sir Isaac Newton's confession of ignorance and inexperience seems to her to mark a

lower grade of character and intelligence than the assurance of Mr. Stiggins, who knows everything and can move mountains with his faith. I know this high-class deity very well. When I hire a furnished house for my holidays, as I very often do, I find his portrait in the best bedroom. It is the portrait of a perfect gentleman, not older than thirty-eight, with nice hair, a nice beard, nice draperies, a nice pet lamb under his arm or somewhere about, and an expression which combines the tone of the best society with the fascination of Wilson Barrett as Hamlet. The ladies who worship him are themselves worshipped by innumerable poor Joblings in shabby lodgings who pin up the Galaxy Gallery of British Beauty on their walls. Far be it from me to mock at this worship: if you dare not or cannot look the universe in the face you will at least be the better for adoring that spark of the divine beauty and the eternal force that glimmers through the

weaknesses and inadequacies of a pretty man or a handsome woman; but please, dear sect of sweethearts, do not mock at me either. You have your nicely buttered little problem and are content with its nicely buttered little solution. I have to face a larger problem and find a larger solution; and since on my scale the butter runs short I must serve the bread of life dry. *The Academy*, 29th June 1907.

The Golden Rule

WHAT Ibsen insists on is that there is no golden rule—that conduct must justify itself by its effect upon happiness and not by its conformity to any rule or ideal. And since happiness consists in the fulfilment of the will, which is constantly growing, and cannot be fulfilled to-day under the conditions which secured its fulfilment yesterday, he claims afresh the old Protestant right of private judgment in questions of conduct as against all institutions, the so-called Protestant Churches themselves

included. *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, pp. 140, 141.

IT is impossible to prove that the governing few have ever, in any generally valid sense, been the ablest men of their time. James I. governed Shakespear: was he an abler man? Louis XV. and his mistresses governed Turgot: was it by their superiority in ability or character? *Socialism and Superior Brains*, p. 52.

When power and riches are thrown haphazard into children's cradles as they are in England, you get a governing class without industry, character, courage, or real experience; and under such circumstances reforms are produced only by catastrophes followed by panics in which "something must be done." Thus it costs a cholera epidemic to achieve a Public Health Act, a Crimean War to reform the Civil Service, and a gunpowder plot to disestablish the Irish

Church. It was by the light, not of reason, but of the moon, that the need for paying serious attention to the Irish land question was seen in England. *John Bull's Other Island*, pp. xxv., xxvi.

LORD SUMMERHAYS. Men are not governed by justice, but by law or persuasion. When they refuse to be governed by law or persuasion, they have to be governed by force or fraud, or both. I used both when law and persuasion failed me. Every ruler of men since the world began has done so, even when he has hated both fraud and force as heartily as I do. *Misalliance* (unpublished 1912).

We are all now under what Burke called "the hoofs of the swinish multitude." Burke's language gave great offence because the implied exceptions to its universal application made it a class insult; and it certainly was not for the pot to call the kettle black. The aristocracy he defended, in spite of the political

marriages by which it tried to secure breeding for itself, had its mind undertrained by silly schoolmasters and governesses, its character corrupted by gratuitous luxury, its self-respect adulterated to complete spuriousness by flattery and flunkeyism. It is no better to-day and never will be any better: our very peasants have something morally hardier in them that culminates occasionally in a Bunyan, a Burns, or a Carlyle. But observe, this aristocracy, which was overpowered from 1832 to 1885 by the middle class, has come back to power by the votes of "the swinish multitude." Tom Paine has triumphed over Edmund Burke; and the swine are now courted electors. How many of their own class have these electors sent to parliament? Hardly a dozen out of 670, and these only under the persuasion of conspicuous personal qualifications and popular eloquence. The multitude thus pronounces judgment on its own units: it admits itself unfit to gov-

ern, and will vote only for a man morphologically and generically transfigured by palatial residence and equipage, by transcendent tailoring, by the glamor of aristocratic kinship. Well, we two know these transfigured persons, these college passmen, these well groomed monocular Algys and Bobbies, these cricketers to whom age brings golf instead of wisdom, these plutocratic products of "the nail and sarspan business as he got his money by." Do they know whether to laugh or cry at the notion that they, poor devils! will drive a team of continents as they drive a four-in-hand; turn a jostling anarchy of casual trade and speculation into an ordered productivity; and federate our colonies into a world-Power of the first magnitude? Give these people the most perfect political constitution and the soundest political program that benevolent omniscience can devise for them, and they will interpret it into mere fashionable folly or canting charity

as infallibly as a savage converts the philosophical theology of a Scotch missionary into crude African idolatry. *Man and Superman,* pp. xxii., xxiii.

A King is an idol: that is why I am a Republican. *The New Age,* 2nd June 1910.

When an artificial aristocracy is created by idolization it will work with all the appearance of a natural and inevitable system as long as the aristocrats not only wear their trappings and keep up the observances which set their daily lives and habits apart from those of ordinary folk, but also do the work which the idolization system was invented to provide for, and without which it has no sense. But once let them evade the work whilst retaining the privileges, and they will become an idle class, and, as such, an inferior class; for no mortal power can maintain the idler at a higher level than the worker. The idol who

does not earn his worship is an impostor and a robber; and it is found in practice that whereas an aristocracy which really governs can maintain its supremacy even when its members are in their personal conduct what we should call infernal scoundrels, aristocracies of the most charming ladies and gentlemen imaginable who do not govern, finally collapse and are trampled out with every circumstance of violence and insult by the mob. By the mob I mean the unidolized.

The question for the political scientist, in other words for the Fabian, is whether it is possible to devise any system of constitutional checks or safeguards by which the system of government by idolized aristocracy can be secured against this danger. And when I say idolized aristocracy, I include its latest form, which is an idolized bureaucracy of experts. Socialism without experts is as impossible as shipbuilding without experts or dentistry without experts. In so far as we have already

done without experts, we have done without Socialism; and all the fears expressed that Socialism will produce a huge increase of officialism are quite well grounded: under Socialism we shall all be officials, actually or potentially.
Unpublished.

The insensibility of the English governing classes to philosophical, moral and social considerations—in short, to any considerations which require a little intellectual exertion and sympathetic alertness—is tempered, as we Irish well know, by an absurd susceptibility to intimidation. *John Bull's Other Island,* p. xxvi.

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The Great Man's Burden

CLEOPATRA. When I was foolish, I did what I liked, except when Ftatateeta beat me; and even then I cheated her and did it by stealth. Now that Cæsar has made me wise, it is no use my liking or disliking: I do what must be done, and have no time to at-

tend to myself. That is not happiness; but it is greatness.

Cæsar and Cleopatra. p. 165.

Happiness

YOU must never say that the knowledge of how to live without happiness *is* happiness. A teetotaller might as well preach that the knowledge of how to practise total abstinence is the truest drunkenness. Happiness is not the object of life: life has no object: it is an end in itself; and courage consists in the readiness to sacrifice happiness for an intenser quality of life. *Correspondence.*

Heaven

KEEGAN. In my dreams heaven is a country where the State is the Church and the Church the people: three in one and one in three. It is a commonwealth in which work is play and play is life: three in one and one in three. It is a temple in which the priest is the worshipper and worshipper the worshipped: three in one and one in

three. It is a godhead in which all life is human and all humanity divine: three in one and one in three. *John Bull's Other Island,* p. 125.

DON JUAN. In Heaven, as I picture it, dear lady, you live and work instead of playing and pretending. You face things as they are; you escape nothing but glamor; and your steadfastness and your peril are your glory. *Man and Superman,* p. 104.

DON JUAN. Do you suppose heaven is like earth, where people persuade themselves that what is done can be undone by repentance; that what is spoken can be unspoken by withdrawing it; that what is true can be annihilated by a general agreement to give it the lie? No: Heaven is the home of the masters of reality. *Man and Superman,* p. 103.

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Heaven and Hell

THE DEVIL. The gulf between Heaven and Hell is the difference betweer the angelic and the diabolic

temperament. What more impassable gulf could you have? Think of what you have seen on earth. There is no physical gulf between the philosopher's class room and the bull ring; but the bull fighters do not come to the class room for all that. Have you ever been in the country where I have the largest following—England? There they have great race-courses, and also concert rooms where they play the classical compositions of his Excellency's friend Mozart. Those who go to the race-courses can stay away from them and go to the classical concerts instead if they like: there is no law against it; for Englishmen never will be slaves: they are free to do whatever the Government and public opinion allow them to do. And the classical concert is admitted to be a higher, more cultivated, poetic, intellectual, ennobling place than the race-course. But do the lovers of racing desert their sport and flock to the concert room? Not they. They would suffer

there all the weariness the Commander has suffered in Heaven. There is the great gulf of the parable between the two places. A mere physical gulf they could bridge; or at least I could bridge it for them (the earth is full of Devil's Bridges); but the gulf of dislike is impassable and eternal. *Man and Superman,* pp. 101, 102.

DON JUAN. Señor Commander: you know the way to the frontier of hell and heaven. Be good enough to direct me.

THE STATUE. Oh, the frontier is only the difference between two ways of looking at things. Any road will take you across it if you really want to get there. *Man and Superman,* p. 135.

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HELL is the home of honor, duty, justice, and the rest of the seven deadly virtues. All the wickedness on earth is done in their name: where else but in hell should they have their re- Hell

ward? Have I not told you that the truely damned are those who are happy in hell? *Man and Superman*, p. 91.

Hell is paved with good intentions, not with bad ones. *Man and Superman*, p. 239.

KEEGAN. This world, sir, is very clearly a place of torment and penance, a place where the fool flourishes and the good and wise are hated and persecuted, a place where men and women torture one another in the name of love; where children are scourged and enslaved in the name of parental duty and education; where the weak in body are poisoned and mutilated in the name of healing, and the weak in character are put to the horrible torture of imprisonment, not for hours but for years, in the name of justice. It is a place where the hardest toil is a welcome refuge from the horror and tedium of pleasure, and where charity and good works are done only for hire to ransom the souls of the

spoiler and the sybarite. Now, sir, there is only one place of horror and torment known to my religion; and that place is hell. Therefore it is plain to me that this earth of ours must be hell, and that we are all here to expiate crimes committed by us in a former existence.

John Bull's Other Island, p. 97.

THE English are extremely particular in selecting their butlers, whilst they do not select their barons at all, taking them as the accident of birth sends them. The consequences include much ironic comedy. *The Irrational Knot*, p. xiii.

The Hereditary Principle

THERE are two sorts of family life, Phil; and your experience of human nature only extends, so far, to one of them. The sort you know is based on mutual respect, on recognition of the right of every member of the household to independence and privacy in their

The Home

personal concerns. And because you have always enjoyed that, it seems such a matter of course to you that you don't value it. But there is another sort of family life; a life in which husbands open their wives' letters and call on them to account for every farthing of their expenditure and every moment of their time; in which women do the same to their children; in which no room is private and no hour sacred; in which duty, obedience, affection, home, morality and religion are detestable tyrannies, and life is a vulgar round of punishments and lies, coercion and rebellion, jealousy, suspicion, recrimination. *You Never Can Tell,* pp. 234, 235.

Home Rule

EVEN if Home Rule were as unhealthy as an Englishman's eating, as intemperate as his drinking, as filthy as his smoking, as licentious as his domesticity, as corrupt as his elections, as murderously greedy as his commerce, as cruel as his prisons, and as merciless

as his streets, Ireland's claim to self-government would still be as good as England's. *John Bull's Other Island*, p. xxxviii.

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Hospitals

HOSPITALS are not public luxuries, but public necessities: when the private contributor buttons up his pocket—as he invariably now does if he understands what he is about—the result is not that the sick poor are left to perish in their slums, but that a hospital rate is struck, and the hospitals happily rescued from the abuses of practically irresponsible private management (which the rich writers of conscience-money cheques never dream of attempting to control), with income uncertain; authority scrambled for by committee, doctors, chiefs of the nursing staff, and permanent officials; and the angel-eyed nurses, coarsely and carelessly fed, sweated and overworked beyond all endurance except by women to whom the opportunity of pursuing a universally

respected occupation with a considerable chance of finally marrying a doctor is worth seizing at any cost. For this the overthrow of the begging, cadging, advertising, voluntary-contribution system means the substitution of the certain income, the vigilant audit, the expert official management, the standard wages and hours of work, the sensitiveness to public opinion (including that of the class to which the patients belong), the subjection to fierce criticism by party newspapers keen for scandals to be used as local electioneering capital, all of which have been called into action by the immense development in local government under the Acts of the last ten years. Of course, as long as ignorant philanthropists, and people anxious to buy positions as public benefactors, maintain private hospitals by private subscription, the ratepayers and the local authorities will be only too glad to shirk their burdens and duties, just as they would if they could induce

philanthropists to light and pave the streets for them; but when the philanthropists learn that the only practical effect of their misplaced bounty on the poor is that the patient gets less accommodation and consideration, and the nurse less pay and no security in return for longer hours of labor, they will begin to understand how all the old objections to pauperizing individuals apply with tenfold force to pauperizing the public. *The Saturday Review*, 19th December 1896.

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A Humanitarian

YET this hand,
That many a two days bruise hath ruthless given,
Hath kept no dungeon locked for twenty years,
Hath slain no sentient creature for my sport.
I am too squeamish for your dainty world,
That cowers behind the gallows and the lash,

The world that robs the poor and with
their spoil
Does what its tradesmen tell it. Oh,
your ladies!
Sealskinned and egret-feathered; all de-
fiance
To Nature; cowering if one say to them
"What will the servants think?" Your
gentlemen!
Your tailor-tyrannized visitors of whom
Flutter of wing and singing in the wood
Make chickenbutchers. And your medi-
cine men!
Groping for cures in the tormented en-
trails
Of friendly dogs.

The Admirable Bashville, p. 31.

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Human Nature and Institutions

WE must finally adapt our institutions to human nature. In the long run our present plan of trying to force human nature into a mould of existing abuses, superstitions, and cor-

rupt interests, produces the explosive forces that wreck civilization.

Getting Married, p. 204.

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IBSEN never presents his play to you as a romance for your entertainment: he says, in effect, "Here is yourself and myself, our society, our civilization. The evil and good, the horror and the hope of it, are woven out of your life and mine." *The Saturday Review*, 27th April 1895. Ibsen

If Ibsen were to visit London, and express his opinion of our English theatre —as Wagner expressed his opinion of the Philharmonic Society, for example —our actors and managers would go down to posterity as exactly such persons as Ibsen described them. He is master of the situation, this man of genius; and when we complain that he does not share our trumpery little notions of life and society; that the themes

that make us whine and wince have no terrors for him, but infinite interest; and that he is far above the barmaid's and shop superintendent's obligation to be agreeable to Tom, Dick and Harry (which naturally convinces Tom, Dick and Harry that he is no gentleman), we are not making out a case against him, but simply stating the grounds of his eminence. When any person objects to an Ibsen play because it does not hold the mirror up to his own mind, I can only remind him that a horse might make exactly the same objection. For my own part, I do not endorse all Ibsen's views: I even prefer my own plays to his in some respects; but I hope I know a great man from a little one as far as my comprehension of such things goes. Criticism may be pardoned for every mistake except that of not knowing a man of rank in literature when it meets one. *The Saturday Review*, 30th January 1897.

WHEN an American journalist describes Sir Edward Burne-Jones as "The English Gustave Doré," or declares Madox Brown to have been "as a realist, second only to Frith," he means well; and possibly the victims of his good intentions give him credit for them. But I do most earnestly beg the inhabitants of this island to be extremely careful how they compare any foreigner to Shakespear. The foreigner can know nothing of Shakspear's power over language. He can only judge him by his intellectual force and dramatic insight, quite apart from his beauty of expression. From such a test Ibsen comes out with a double first class: Shakespear comes out hardly anywhere. Our English deficiency in analytic power makes it extremely hard for us to understand how a man who is great in any respect can be insignificant in any other respect; and perhaps the average foreigner is not much cleverer. But when the foreigner has the particu-

lar respect in which our man is great cut off from him artificially by the change of language, as a screen of coloured glass will shut off certain rays from a camera, then the deficiency which is concealed even from our experts by the splendour of Shakespear's literary gift, may be obvious to quite commonplace people who know him only through translations. In any language of the world Brand, Peer Gynt, and Emperor or Galilean prove their author a thinker of extraordinary penetration, and a moralist of international influence. Turn from them to To be or not to be, or The seven ages of man, and imagine, if you can, anybody more critical than a village schoolmaster being imposed on by such platitudinous fudge. The comparison does not honor Ibsen: it makes Shakespear ridiculous; and for both their sakes it should not be drawn. If we cannot for once leave the poor Bard alone, let us humbly apologize to Ibsen for our foolish worship of a foolish col-

lection of shallow proverbs in blank verse. Let us plead that if we compare, not the absolute Shakespear with the absolute Ibsen, but the advance from the old stage zany Hamblet to our William's Hamlet with the advance from Faust to Peer Gynt, Hamlet was really a great achievement, and might stand as an isolated feat against Peer Gynt as an isolated feat. But as it led to nothing, whereas Peer Gynt led to so much that it now ranks only as part of Ibsen's romantic wild oats—above all, as Ibsen's message nerved him to fight all Europe in the teeth of starvation, whereas Shakespear's was not proof even against the ignorance and vulgarity of the London playgoer, it only needs another turn of the discussion to shew that a comparison of the two popular masterpieces is like a comparison of the Eiffel Tower to one of the peaks in an Alpine chain. *The Saturday Review,* 26th March 1898.

DON JUAN. This creature Man, who in his own selfish affairs is a coward to the backbone, will fight for an idea like a hero. He may be abject as a citizen; but he is dangerous as a fanatic. He can only be enslaved whilst he is spiritually weak enough to listen to reason. I tell you, gentlemen, if you can shew a man a piece of what he now calls God's work to do, and what he will later on call by many new names, you can make him entirely reckless of the consequences to himself personally.

Man and Superman, p. 111.

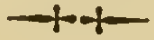
DON JUAN. Every idea for which Man will die will be a Catholic idea. When the Spaniard learns at last that he is no better than the Saracen, and his prophet no better than Mahomet, he will arise, more Catholic than ever, and die on a barricade across the filthy slum he starves in, for universal liberty and equality.

THE STATUE. Bosh!

DON JUAN. What you call bosh is the only thing men dare die for. Later on, Liberty will not be Catholic enough: men will die for human perfection, to which they will sacrifice all their liberty gladly.

THE DEVIL. Ay: they will never be at a loss for an excuse for killing one another.

DON JUAN. What of that! It is not death that matters, but the fear of death. It is not killing and dying that degrades us, but base living, and accepting the wages and profits of degradation. *Man and Superman,* p. 110.



Ideals

AS Man grows through the ages, he finds himself bolder by the growth of his spirit (if I may so name the unknown) and dares more and more to love and trust instead of to fear and fight. But his courage has other effects: he also raises himself from mere consciousness to knowledge by daring

more and more to face facts and tell himself the truth. For in his infancy of helplessness and terror he could not face the inexorable; and facts being of all things the most inexorable, he masked all the threatening ones as fast as he discovered them; so that now every mask requires a hero to tear it off. The King of terrors, Death, was the Arch-Inexorable: Man could not bear the dread of that thought. He must persuade himself that Death could be propitiated, circumvented, abolished. How he fixed the mask of immortality on the face of Death for this purpose we all know. And he did the like with all disagreeables as long as they remained inevitable. Otherwise he must have gone mad with terror of the grim shapes around him, headed by the skeleton with the scythe and hourglass. The masks were his ideals, as he called them; and what, he would ask, would life be without ideals? Thus he became an idealist, and remained so until he dared to

begin pulling the masks off and looking the spectres in the face—dared, that is, to be more and more a realist. But all men are not equally brave; and the greatest terror prevailed whenever some realist bolder than the rest laid hands on a mask which they did not yet dare to do without.

We have plenty of these masks round us still—some of them more fantastic than any of the Sandwich Islanders' masks in the British Museum. In our novels and romances especially we see the most beautiful of all the masks—those devised to disguise the brutalities of the sexual instinct in the earlier stages of its development, and to soften the rigorous aspect of the iron laws by which Society regulates its gratification.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, pp. 20, 21.

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Idealism

IDEALISM, which is only a flattering name for romance in politics and morals, is as obnoxious to me as ro-

mance in ethics or religion. *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant.* Vol. II. *Pleasant,* p. xviii.

The realist at last loses patience with ideals altogether, and sees in them only something to blind us, something to numb us, something whereby, instead of resisting death, we can disarm it by committing suicide. The idealist, who has taken refuge with the ideals because he hates himself and is ashamed of himself, thinks that all this is so much the better. The realist, who has come to have a deep respect for himself and faith in the validity of his own will, thinks it so much the worse. To the one, human nature, naturally corrupt, is only held back from the excesses of the last years of the Roman Empire by self-denying conformity to the ideals. To the other, these ideals are only swaddling clothes which man has outgrown, and which insufferably impede his movements. No wonder the two cannot

agree. The idealist says, "Realism means egotism; and egotism means depravity." The realist declares that when a man abnegates the will to live and be free in a world of the living and free, seeking only to conform to ideals for the sake of being, not himself, but "a good man," then he is morally dead and rotten, and must be left unheeded to abide his resurrection, if that by good luck arrive before his bodily death.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, pp. 30, 31.

Since it is on the weaknesses of the higher types of character that idealism seizes, Ibsen's examples of vanity, selfishness, folly and failure are not vulgar villains, but men who in an ordinary novel or melodrama would be heroes. His most tragic point is reached in the destinies of Brand and Rosmer, who drive those whom they love to death in its most wanton and cruel form. The ordinary Philistine commits no such atrocities: he marries the woman he

likes, and lives more or less happily ever after; but that is not because he is greater than Brand or Rosmer, but because he is less. The idealist is a more dangerous animal than the Philistine just as a man is a more dangerous animal than a sheep. Though Brand virtually murdered his wife, I can understand many a woman, comfortably married to an amiable Philistine, reading the play and envying the victim her husband. For when Brand's wife, having made the sacrifice he has exacted, tells him that he was right; that she is happy now; that she sees God face to face—but reminds him that "whoso sees Jehovah dies," he instinctively clasps his hands over her eyes; and that action raises him at once far above the criticism that sneers at idealism from beneath, instead of surveying it from the clear ether above, which can only be reached through its mists. *Quintessence of Ibsenism,* pp. 130, 131.

GENERATIONS of shallow critics, mostly amateurs, have laughed at Partridge for admiring the King in Hamlet more than Hamlet himself (with Garrick in the part), because "any one could see that the King was an actor." But surely Partridge was right. He went to the theatre to see, not a real limited monarch, but a stage king, speaking as Partridges like to hear a king speaking, and able to have people's heads cut off, or to brow-beat treason from behind an invisible hedge of majestically asserted divinity. Fielding misunderstood the matter because in a world of Fieldings there would be neither kings nor Partridges. It is all very well for Hamlet to declare that the business of the theatre is to hold the mirror up to nature. He is allowed to do it out of respect for the bard, just as he is allowed to say to a minor actor, "Do not saw the air thus," though he has himself been sawing the air all the evening, and the unfortunate minor ac-

tor has hardly had the chance of cutting a chip off with a penknife. But everybody knows perfectly well that the function of the theatre is to realize for the spectators certain pictures which their imagination craves for, the said pictures being fantastic as the dreams of Alnaschar. Nature is only brought in as an accomplice in the illusion: for example, the actress puts rouge on her cheek instead of burnt cork because it looks more natural; but the moment the illusion is sacrificed to nature, the house is up in arms and the play is chivied from the stage. I began my own dramatic career by writing plays in which I faithfully held the mirror up to nature. They are much admired in private reading by social reformers, industrial investigators, and revolted daughters; but on one of them being rashly exhibited behind the footlights, it was received with a paroxysm of execration, whilst the mere perusal of the others induces loathing in every person, including my-

self, in whom the theatrical instinct flourishes in its integrity. Shakespear made exactly one attempt, in Troilus and Cressida, to hold the mirror up to nature; and he probably nearly ruined himself by it. *The Saturday Review*, 7th November 1896.

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Imperialism

WHAT is all this growing love of pageantry, this effusive loyalty, this officious rising and uncovering at a wave from a flag or a blast from a brass band? Imperialism? Not a bit of it. Obsequiousness, servility, cupidity roused by the prevailing smell of money. When Mr. Carnegie rattled his millions in his pockets all England became one rapacious cringe. Only, when Rhodes (who had probably been reading my Socialism for Millionaires) left word that no idler was to inherit his estate, the bent backs straightened mistrustfully for a moment. Could it be that the Diamond King was no gentleman after all?

However, it was easy to ignore a rich man's solecism. The ungentlemanly clause was not mentioned again; and the backs soon bowed themselves back into their natural shape. *Man and Superman,* p. xxv.

Now for England's share of warning. Let her look to her Empire; for unless she makes it such a Federation for civil strength and defence that all free peoples will cling to it voluntarily, it will inevitably become a military tyranny to prevent them from abandoning it; and such a tyranny will drain the English taxpayer of his money more effectually than its worst cruelties can ever drain its victims of their liberty. A political scheme that cannot be carried out except by soldiers will not be a permanent one.
John Bull's Other Island, p. xl.

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Individuality

THE moral evolution of the social individual is from submission and obedience as economizers of effort and

responsibility, and safeguards against panic and incontinence, to wilfulness and self-assertion made safe by reason and self-control, just as plainly as his physical growth leads from the perambulator and the nurse's apron-string to the power of walking alone, and from the tutelage of the boy to the responsibility of the man. *The Sanity of Art,* p. 53.

If you study the electric light you will find that your house contains a great quantity of highly susceptible copper wire which gorges itself with electricity and gives you no light whatever. But here and there occurs a scrap of intensely insusceptible, intensely resistant material; and that stubborn scrap grapples with the current and will not let it through until it has made itself useful to you as those two vital qualities of literature, light and heat. Now if I am to be no mere copper wire amateur but a luminous author, I must also be a

most intensely refractory person, liable to go out and to go wrong at inconvenient moments, and with incendiary possibilities. *Man and Superman,* p. xxxvi.

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Infirmity of Purpose

FEW of us have vitality enough to make any of our instincts imperious: we can be made to live on pretences, as the masterful minority well know.

Three Plays for Puritans, p. xvi.

ANN. But, Jack, you cannot get through life without considering other people a little.

TANNER. Ay; but what other people? It is this consideration of other people —or rather this cowardly fear of them which we call consideration—that makes us the sentimental slaves as we are. To consider you, as you call it, is to substitute your will for my own. How if it be a baser will than mine? Are women taught better than men or worse? Are mobs of voters taught better than

statesmen or worse? Worse, of course, in both cases. And then what sort of world are you going to get, with its public men considering its voting mobs, and its private men considering their wives?

Man and Superman, p. 38.

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The Injured Husband

IT seems to me that the natural attitude for a husband whose wife prefers another man is a purely apologetic one; though I observe that on the stage he seems to take it for granted that he is an injured person as well as an unfortunate one. No doubt my moral sense has not been properly trained on such points; so possibly I shall alter my opinion when I get married, though I confess I regard that as an additional reason for not getting married. *The Saturday Review*, 30th November 1895.

When King Arthur left Guinevere grovelling on the floor with her head within an inch of his toes, and stood plainly

conveying to the numerous bystanders that this was the proper position for a female who had forgotten herself so far as to prefer another man to him, one's gorge rose at the Tappertitian vulgarity and infamy of the thing; and it was a relief when the scene ended with a fine old Richard the Third effect of Arthur leading his mail-clad knights off to battle. That vision of a fine figure of a woman, torn with sobs and remorse, stretched at the feet of a nobly superior and deeply wronged lord of creation, is no doubt still as popular with the men whose sentimental vanity it flatters as it was in the days of the Idylls of the King. But since then we have been learning that a woman is something more than a piece of sweetstuff to fatten a man's emotions; and our amateur King Arthurs are beginning to realize, with shocked surprise, that the more generous the race grows the stronger becomes its disposition to bring them to their senses with a stinging dose of

wholesome ridicule. *The Saturday Review*, 19th January 1895.

HIS will, in setting his imagination to work, had produced a great puzzle for his intellect. In no case does the difference between the will and the intellect come out more clearly than in that of the poet, save only that of the lover. . . . It is only the naïf who goes to the creative artist with absolute confidence in receiving an answer to his "What does this passage mean?" That is the very question which the poet's own intellect, which had no part in the conception of the poem, may be asking him. And this curiosity of the intellect—this restless life in it which differentiates it from dead machinery, and which troubles our lesser artists but little, is one of the marks of the greater sort.

Inspiration

Quintessence of Ibsenism, pp. 59, 60.

THE promotion of immoralities into moralities is constantly going on.

The Instability of Morals

Christianity and Mohammedanism, once thought of and dealt with exactly as Anarchism is thought of and dealt with to-day, have become established religions; and fresh immoralities are persecuted in their name. The truth is that the vast majority of persons professing these religions have never been anything but simple moralists. The respectable Englishman who is a Christian because he was born in Clapham would be a Mahometan for the cognate reason if he had been born in Constantinople. He has never willingly tolerated immorality. He did not adopt any innovation until it had become moral; and then he adopted it, not on its merits, but solely because it had become moral. In doing so he never realized that it had ever been immoral; consequently its early struggles taught him no lesson; and he has opposed the next step in human progress as indignantly as if neither manners, customs, nor thought had ever changed since the beginning of the world. Tol-

eration must be imposed on him as a mystic and painful duty by his spiritual and political leaders, or he will condemn the world to stagnation, which is the penalty of an inflexible morality. *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet,* pp. 348, 349.

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Our Institutions

I DO not see moral chaos and anarchy as the alternative to romantic convention; and I am not going to pretend I do merely to please the people who are convinced that the world is only held together by the force of unanimous, strenuous, eloquent, trumpet-tongued lying. To me the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences, sometimes terrible, sometimes ludicrous, of our persistent attempts to found our institutions on the ideals suggested to our imaginations by our half-satisfied passions, instead of on a genuinely scientific natural history. *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant.* Vol. II. *Pleasant,* p. xviii.

One of the evils of the pretence that our institutions represent abstract principles of justice instead of being mere social scaffolding is that persons of a certain temperament take the pretence seriously, and, when the law is on the side of injustice, will not accept the situation, and are driven mad by their vain struggle against it. Dickens has drawn the type in his Man from Shropshire in *Bleak House*. Most public men and all lawyers have been appealed to by victims of this sense of injustice—the most unhelpable of afflictions in a society like ours. *Three Plays for Puritans*, pp. 297, 298.

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It Begins to Date

TO say that fashions change more rapidly than men is a very crude statement of extremes. Everything has its own rate of change. Fashions change more quickly than manners, manners more quickly than morals, morals more quickly than passions, and, in general, the conscious, reasonable, intellectual life more quickly than the instinctive, wilful,

affectionate one. The dramatist who deals with the irony and humour of the relatively durable sides of life, or with their pity and terror, is the one whose comedies and tragedies will last longest —sometimes so long as to lead a book-struck generation to dub him "Immortal," and proclaim him as "not for an age, but for all time." Fashionable dramatists begin to "date," as the critics call it, in a few years: the accusation is rife at present against the earlier plays of Pinero and Grundy, though it is due to these gentlemen to observe that Shakespear's plays must have "dated" far more when they were from twenty to a hundred years old than they have done since the world gave up expecting them to mirror the passing hour. When Caste and Diplomacy were fresh, London Assurance had begun to date most horribly: nowadays Caste and Diplomacy date like the day before yesterday's tinned salmon; whereas if London Assurance were revived (and I beg that

nothing of the kind be attempted), there would be no more question of dating about it than about the plays of Garrick or Tobin or Mrs. Centlivre.

But now observe the consequences, as to this dating business, of the fact that morals change more slowly than costumes and manners, and instincts and passions than morals. It follows, does it not, that every "immortal" play will run the following course. First, like London Assurance its manners and fashions will begin to date. If its matter is deep enough to tide it over this danger, it will come into repute again, like the comedies of Sheridan or Goldsmith, as a modern classic. But after some time —some centuries, perhaps—it will begin to date again in point of its ethical conception. Yet if it deals so powerfully with the instincts and passions of humanity as to survive this also, it will again regain its place, this time as an antique classic, especially if it tells a capital story. It is impossible now to read, with-

out a curdling of the blood and a bristling of the hair, the frightful but dramatically most powerful speech which David, on his deathbed, delivers to his son about the old enemy whom he had himself sworn to spare. "Thou art a wise man and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood." Odysseus, proud of outwitting all men at cheating and lying, and intensely relishing the blood of Penelope's suitors, is equally outside our morality. So is Punch. But David and Ulysses, like Punch and Judy, will survive for many a long day yet. Not until the change has reached our instincts and passions will their stories begin to "date" again for the last time before their final obsolescence.

The Saturday Review, 27th June 1896.

Mr. Henry James's Novels

THERE is no reason why life as we find it in Mr. James's novels—life, that is, in which passion is subordinate

to intellect and to fastidious artistic taste —should not be represented on the stage. If it is real to Mr. James, it must be real to others; and why should not these others have their drama instead of being banished from the theatre (to the theatre's great loss) by the monotony and vulgarity of drama in which passion is everything, intellect nothing, and art only brought in by the incidental outrages upon it. As it happens, I am not myself in Mr. James's camp; in all the life that has energy enough to be interesting to me, subjective volition, passion, will, make intellect the merest tool. But there is in the centre of that cyclone a certain calm spot where cultivated ladies and gentlemen live on independent incomes or by pleasant artistic occupations. It is there that Mr. James's art touches life, selecting whatever is graceful, exquisite, or dignified in its serenity. It is not life as imagined by the pit or gallery, or even by the stalls: it is, let us say, the ideal of the balcony; but

that is no reason why the pit and gallery should excommunicate it on the ground that it has no blood and entrails in it, and have its sentence formulated for it by the fiercely ambitious and wilful professional man in the stalls. The whole case against its adequacy really rests on its violation of the cardinal stage convention that love is the most irresistible of all the passions. Since most people go to the theatre to escape from reality, this convention is naturally dear to a world in which love, all powerful in the secret, unreal, day-dreaming life of the imagination, is in the real active life the abject slave of every trifling habit, prejudice, and cowardice, easily stifled by shyness, class feeling, and pecuniary prudence, or diverted from what is theatrically assumed to be its hurricane course by such obstacles as a thick ankle, a cockney accent, or an unfashionable hat. *The Saturday Review,* 12th January 1895.

John Bunyan and William Shakespear

WHEN I saw a stage version of The Pilgrim's Progress announced for production, I shook my head, knowing that Bunyan is far too great a dramatist for our theatre, which has never been resolute enough even in its lewdness and venality to win the respect and interest which positive, powerful wickedness always engages, much less the services of men of heroic conviction. Its greatest catch, Shakespear, wrote for the theatre because, with extraordinary artistic powers, he understood nothing and believed nothing. Thirty-six big plays in five blank verse acts and (as Ruskin, I think, once pointed out) not a single hero! Only one man in them all who believes in life, enjoys life, thinks life worth living, and has a sincere, unrhetorical tear dropped over his deathbed; and that man—Falstaff! What a crew they are—these Saturday to Monday athletic stockbroker Orlandos, these villains, fools, clowns, drunkards, cowards, intriguers, fighters, lovers, patriots, hypo-

chondriacs who mistake themselves (and are mistaken by the author) for philosophers, princes without any sense of public duty, futile pessimists who imagine they are confronting a barren and unmeaning world when they are only contemplating their own worthlessness, self-seekers of all kinds, keenly observed and masterfully drawn from the romantic-commercial point of view. Once or twice we scent among them an anticipation of the crudest side of Ibsen's polemics on the Woman Question, as in All's Well that Ends Well, where the man cuts as meanly selfish a figure beside his enlightened lady doctor wife as Helmer beside Nora; or in Cymbeline, where Posthumus, having, as he believes, killed his wife for inconstancy, speculates for a moment on what his life would have been worth if the same standard of continence had been applied to himself. And certainly no modern study of the voluptuous temperament, and the spurious heroism and heroinism

which its ecstasies produce, can add much to Antony and Cleopatra, unless it were some sense of the spuriousness on the author's part. But search for statesmanship, or even citizenship, or any sense of the commonwealth, material or spiritual, and you will not find the making of a decent vestryman or curate in the whole horde. As to faith, hope, courage, conviction, or any of the true heroic qualities, you find nothing but death made sensational, despair made stage sublime, sex made romantic, and barrenness covered up by sentimentality and the mechanical lilt of blank verse. All that you miss in Shakespear you find in Bunyan, to whom the true heroic came quite obviously and naturally. The world was to him a more terrible place than it was to Shakespear; but he saw through it a path at the end of which a man might look not only forward to the Celestial City, but back on his life and say:—"Tho' with great difficulty

I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it." The heart vibrates like a bell to such an utterance as this: to turn from it to "Out, out, brief candle," and "The rest is silence," and "We are such stuff as dreams are made of; and our little life is rounded by a sleep" is to turn from life, strength, resolution, morning air and eternal youth, to the terrors of a drunken nightmare.

Let us descend now to the lower ground where Shakespear is not disabled by his inferiority in energy and elevation of spirit. Take one of his big fighting scenes, and compare its blank verse, in point of mere rhetorical strenuousness, with Bunyan's prose. Macbeth's famous cue for the fight with Macduff runs thus:—

Yet I will try the last: before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on,
Macduff,
And damned be him that first cries,
Hold, enough!

Turn from this jingle, dramatically right in feeling, but silly and resourceless in thought and expression, to Apollyon's cue for the fight in the Valley of Humiliation: "I am void of fear in this matter. Prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal den that thou shalt go no farther: here will I spill thy soul." This is the same thing done masterly. Apart from its superior grandeur, force, and appropriateness, it is better claptrap and infinitely better word music.

Shakespear, fond as he is of describing fights, has hardly ever sufficient energy or reality of imagination to finish without betraying the paper origin of his fancies by dragging in something classical in the style of the Cyclops' hammer falling "on Mars's armor, forged

for proof eterne." Hear how Bunyan does it: "I fought till my sword did cleave to my hand; and when they were joined together as if the sword grew out of my arm; and when the blood ran thorow my fingers, then I fought with most courage." Nowhere in all Shakespear is there a touch like that of the blood running down through the man's fingers, and his courage rising to passion at it. Even in mere technical adaptation to the art of the actor, Bunyan's dramatic speeches are as good as Shakespear's tirades. Only a trained dramatic speaker can appreciate the terse manageableness and effectiveness of such a speech as this, with its grandiose exordium, followed up by its pointed question and its stern threat: "By this I perceive thou art one of my subjects; for all that country is mine and I am the Prince and the God of it. How is it then that thou hast ran away from thy King? Were it not that I hope thou mayst do me more service I would strike

thee now at one blow to the ground." Here there is no raving and swearing and rhyming and classical allusion. The sentences go straight to their mark; and their concluding phrases soar like the sunrise, or swing and drop like a hammer, just as the actor wants them.

I might multiply these instances by the dozen; but I had rather leave dramatic students to compare the two authors at first hand. In an article on Bunyan lately published in the Contemporary Review—the only article worth reading on the subject I ever saw (yes, thank you: I am quite familiar with Macaulay's patronizing prattle about The Pilgrim's Progress)—Mr. Richard Heath, the historian of the Anabaptists, shows how Bunyan learnt his lesson, not only from his own rough pilgrimage through life, but from the tradition of many an actual journey from real Cities of Destruction (under Alva), with Interpreters' houses and convoy of Great-hearts all complete. Against such a man

what chance had our poor immortal William, with his "little Latin" (would it had been less like his Greek!), his heathen mythology, his Plutarch, his Boccaccio, his Holinshed, his circle of London literary wits, soddening their minds with books and their nerves with alcohol (quite like us), and all the rest of his Strand and Fleet Street surroundings, activities and interests, social and professional, mentionable and unmentionable? Let us applaud him, in due measure, in that he came out of it no blackguardedly Bohemian, but a thoroughly respectable snob; raised the desperation and cynicism of its outlook to something like sublimity in his tragedies; dramatized its morbid, self-centred passions and its feeble and shallow speculations with all the force that was in them; disinfected it by copious doses of romantic poetry, fun, and common-sense; and gave to its perpetual sex-obsession the relief of individual character and feminine winsomeness. Also—if you are a suffi-

ciently good Whig—that after incarnating the spirit of the whole epoch which began with the sixteenth century and is ending (I hope) with the nineteenth, he is still the idol of all well-read children. But as he never thought a noble life worth living or a great work worth doing, because the commercial profit and loss sheet shewed that the one did not bring happiness nor the other money, he never struck the great vein—the vein in which Bunyan told of that "man of a very stout countenance" who went up to the keeper of the book of life and said, not "Out, out, brief candle," but "Set down my name, sir," and immediately fell on the armed men and cut his way into heaven after receiving and giving many wounds. *The Saturday Review*, 2nd January 1897.

Judgment

LUCIUS. Pshaw! You have seen severed heads before, Cæsar, and severed right hands too, I think; some thousands of them, in Gaul, after you

vanquished Vercingetorix. Did you spare him, with all your clemency? Was that vengeance?

CÆSAR. No, by the Gods! would that it had been! Vengeance at least is human. No, I say: those severed right hands and the brave Vercingetorix basely strangled in a vault beneath the Capitol, were [*with shuddering satire*] a wise severity, a necessary protection to the commonwealth, a duty of statesmanship—follies and fictions ten times bloodier than honest vengeance! What a fool was I then! To think that men's lives should be at the mercy of such fools!

Cæsar and Cleopatra, pp. 123, 124.

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Laodiceanism

WHAT people call goodness has to be kept in check just as carefully as what they call badness; for the human constitution will not stand very much of either without serious psychological mischief, ending in insanity or crime. The fact that the insanity may be privileged, as Savonarola's was, up to the point of

wrecking the social life of Florence, does not alter the case. We always hesitate to treat a dangerously good man as a lunatic because he may turn out to be a prophet in the true sense: that is, a man of exceptional sanity who is in the right when we are in the wrong. However necessary it may have been to get rid of Savonarola, it was foolish to poison Socrates and burn St. Joan of Arc. But it is none the less necessary to take a firm stand against the monstrous proposition that because certain attitudes and sentiments may be heroic and admirable at some momentous crisis, they should or can be maintained at the same pitch continuously through life. A life spent in prayer and almsgiving is really as insane as a life spent in cursing and picking pockets: the effect of everybody leading it would be equally disastrous.

Getting Married, pp. 137, 138.

Ethical strain is just as bad for us as physical strain. It is desirable that the

normal pitch of conduct at which men are not conscious of being particularly virtuous, although they feel mean when they fall below it, should be raised as high as possible; but it is not desirable that they should attempt to live constantly above this pitch any more than that they should habitually walk at the rate of five miles an hour, or carry a hundredweight continually on their backs. Their normal condition should be in nowise difficult or remarkable; and it is a perfectly sound instinct that leads us to mistrust the good man as much as the bad man, and to object to the clergyman who is pious extra-professionally as much as to the professional pugilist who is quarrelsome and violent in private life. We do not want good men and bad men any more than we want giants and dwarfs. What we do want is a high quality for our normal: that is, people who can be much better than what we now call respectable without self-sacrifice. Conscious goodness, like conscious

muscular effort, may be of use in emergencies; but for everyday national use it is negligible; and its effect on the character of the individual may easily be disastrous. *Getting Married*, pp. 138, 139.

Law

IN a developing civilization nothing can make laws tolerable unless their changes and modifications are kept as closely as possible on the heels of the changes and modifications in social conditions which development involves. Also there is a bad side to the very convenience of law. It deadens the conscience of individuals by relieving them of the ethical responsibility of their own actions. *The Sanity of Art*. p. 52.

Law is never so necessary as when it has no ethical significance whatever, and is pure law for the sake of law. The law that compels me to keep to the left when driving along Oxford Street is ethically senseless, as is shewn by the fact that keeping to the right answers equally well

in Paris; and it certainly destroys my freedom to choose my side; but by enabling me to count on every one else keeping to the left also, thus making traffic possible and safe, it enlarges my life and sets my mind free for nobler issues. *The Sanity of Art,* p. 48.

The continual danger to liberty created by law arises, not from the encroachments of Governments, which are always regarded with suspicion, but from the immense utility and consequent popularity of law, and the terrifying danger and obvious inconvenience of anarchy; so that even pirates appoint and obey a captain. Law soon acquires such a good character that people will believe no evil of it; and at this point it becomes possible for priests and rulers to commit the most pernicious crimes in the name of law and order.

The Sanity of Art, p. 51.

Godhead, face to face with Stupidity, must compromise. Unable to enforce on

the world the pure law of thought, it must resort to a mechanical law of commandments to be enforced by brute punishments and the destruction of the disobedient. And however carefully these laws are framed to represent the highest thoughts of the framers at the moment of their promulgation, before a day has elapsed that thought has grown and widened by the ceaseless evolution of life; and lo! yesterday's law already fallen out with today's thought. Yet if the high givers of that law themselves set the example of breaking it before it is a week old, they destroy all its authority with their subjects, and so break the weapon they have forged to rule them for their own good. They must therefore maintain at all costs the sanctity of the law, even when it has ceased to represent their thought; so that at last they get entangled in a network of ordinances which they no longer believe in, and yet have made so sacred by custom and so terrible by punishment, that they

cannot themselves escape from them. Thus Wotan's resort to law finally costs him half the integrity of his godhead—as if a spiritual king, to gain temporal power, had plucked out one of his eyes—and at last he begins secretly to long for the advent of some power higher than himself which will destroy his artificial empire of law, and establish a true republic of free thought.

The Perfect Wagnerite, p. 11.

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The Law of Rent

MODERN civilization is reduced to absurdity by obvious and monstrous inequalities and injustices in the distribution of wealth and the encouragement of labor. The well-to-do-man ascribes these to inequalities of character, to improvidence, intemperance and laziness being beaten in the race by thrift, sobriety and industry. The poor man pleads that he is unlucky. Both will tell you that if an equal distribution of goods were made now, all the present inequalities would presently reappear.

This is quite true, and would be equally true if the equal distribution of goods were accompanied by an equal and permanent distribution of character. Character is a negligible factor in the business. The real importance of the law of rent is that it shews how the governing factor in the distribution of wealth is not the individual human producer, but the material at his disposal and the place in which he works. Faculty is tolerably equally divided; but soils and situations vary enormously. And so in the course of time the proprietors of the better soils and the masters of the better situations become rich without working at all, and accumulate spare money. And spare money, according to the terse and perfect definition of Jevons, is capital: the most important of all the factors in production nowadays. This science of rent is the foundation of modern economic socialism, the greatest revolutionary force of your time. Life, Literature and Political Economy.

Clare Market Review, January 1906, p. 31.

THERE are often profoundly moral necessities at the back of a lie; and it is often well to give a false consciousness to another person. Illusions play a large and often beneficial part in human conduct; and truth may mean falsehood to people incapable of it: a nurse's reason to a child may be of more use to the child than the reason Socrates would have given to Plato on the same point. Life, Literature and Political Economy. *Clare Market Review*, January 1906, p. 29. **The Lie**

RATIONALLY considered, life is only worth living when its pleasures are greater than its pains. Now to a generation which has ceased to believe in heaven, and has not yet learned that the degradation by poverty of four out of every five of its number is artificial and remediable, the fact that life is not worth **The Life Force**

living is obvious. Is is useless to pretend that the pessimism of Koheleth, Shakespear, Dryden and Swift can be refuted if the world progresses solely by the destruction of the unfit, and yet can only maintain its civilization by manufacturing the unfit in swarms of which that appalling proportion of four to one represents but the comparatively fit survivors. Plainly, then, the reasonable thing for the rationalists to do is to refuse to live. But as none of them will commit suicide in obedience to this demonstration of "the necessity" for it, there is an end of the notion that we live for reasons instead of in fulfilment of our will to live.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, p. 13.

Demonstrate to me that life is religiously, morally, scientifically, politically, philosophically and practically not worth going on with, and I *must* reply, So much the worse, not for life, but for what you call religion, science, politics,

philosophy, and the current practice of the art of living. There is something wrong with these things if they lead to nihilistic conclusions. Civilization and the Soldier. *The Humane Review*, January 1901, p. 302.

It was not the Churches but that very freethinking philosopher Schopenhauer who re-established the old theological doctrine that reason is no motive power; that the true motive power in the world is will (otherwise Life); and that the setting-up of reason above will is a damnable error. But the theologians could not open their arms to Schopenhauer, because he fell into the Rationalist-Mercantilist error of valuing life according to its individual profits in pleasure, and of course came to the idiotic pessimist conclusion that life is not worth living, and that the will which urges us to live in spite of this is necessarily a malign torturer, or at least a bad hand at business, the desirable end of all things being

the Nirvana of the stilling of the will and the consequent setting of life's sun "into the blind cave of eternal night." . . .

We can now, as soon as we are strong-minded enough, drop the Nirvana nonsense, the pessimism, the rationalism, the supernatural theology, and all the other subterfuges to which we cling because we are afraid to look life straight in the face and see in it, not the fulfilment of a moral law or of the deductions of reason, but the satisfaction of a passion in us of which we can give no rational account whatever.

It is natural for man to shrink from the terrible responsibility thrown on him by this inexorable fact.

The Sanity of Art, pp. 57, 58.

I suggest to you that the reason why we go on striving to understand life better instead of confining ourselves to mere pleasure hunting, is that this mysterious force behind us—I will call it the Life

Force—is itself in desperate need of an organ of intelligent consciousness; and that the human mind is its most elaborate experiment in the evolution of such an organ. Life, Literature and Political Economy. *The Clare Market Review,* January 1906, p. 28.

Do you see that the reason you will decide to continue living is that you have in hand the pressing business of conquering for the Life Force a larger, higher, more intelligent, more comprehensive consciousness: in short to enable it to economize? Life, Literature and Political Economy. *Clare Market Review,* January 1906, p. 28.

DON JUAN. Man gives every reason for his conduct save one, every excuse for his crimes save one, every plea for his safety save one; and that one is his cowardice. Yet all his civilization is founded on his cowardice, on his abject tameness, which he calls his respectability. There are limits to what a mule

or an ass will stand; but Man will suffer himself to be degraded until his vileness becomes so loathsome to his oppressors that they themselves are forced to reform it.

THE DEVIL. Precisely. And these are the creatures in whom you discover what you call a Life Force!

DON JUAN. Yes; for now comes the most surprising part of the whole business.

THE STATUE. What's that?

DON JUAN. Why, that you can make any of these cowards brave by simply putting an idea into his head.

THE STATUE. Stuff! As an old soldier I admit the cowardice: it's as universal as sea sickness, and matters just as little. But that about putting an idea into a man's head is stuff and nonsense. In a battle all you need to make you fight is a little hot blood and the knowledge that it's more dangerous to lose than to win.

DON JUAN. That is perhaps why battles are so useless. But men never really overcome fear until they imagine they are fighting to further a universal purpose—fighting for an idea, as they call it. Why was the Crusader braver than the pirate? Because he fought, not for himself, but for the Cross. What force was it that met him with a valor as reckless as his own? The force of men who fought, not for themselves, but for Islam.

Man and Superman, pp. 109, 110.

ANA. Is there nothing in heaven but contemplation, Juan?

DON JUAN. In the Heaven I seek, no other joy. But there is the work of helping Life in its struggle upward. Think of how it wastes and scatters itself, how it raises up obstacles to itself and destroys itself in its ignorance and blindness. It needs a brain, this irresistible force, lest in its ignorance it should resist itself. What a piece of

work is a man! says the poet. Yes: but what a blunderer! Here is the highest miracle of organization yet attained by life, the most intensely alive thing that exists, the most conscious of all the organisms; and yet, how wretched are his brains! Stupidity made sordid and cruel by the realities learnt from toil and poverty: Imagination resolved to starve sooner than face these realities, piling up illusions to hide them, and calling itself cleverness, genius! And each accusing the other of its own defect: Stupidity accusing Imagination of folly, and Imagination accusing Stupidity of ignorance: whereas, alas! Stupidity has all the knowledge, and Imagination all the intelligence.

Man and Superman, pp. 105, 106.

If we could only realize that though the Life Force supplies us with its own purpose, it has no other brains to work with than those it has painfully and imperfectly evolved in our heads,

the peoples of the earth would learn some pity for their gods; and we should have a religion that would not be contradicted at every turn by the thing that is giving the lie to the thing that ought to be.

The Irrational Knot, pp. xxv., xxvi.

DON JUAN. I tell you that as long as I can conceive something better than myself I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life. That is the working within me of Life's incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self-understanding. *Man and Superman,* p. 129.

DON JUAN. A picture gallery is a dull place for a blind man. But even as you enjoy the contemplation of such romantic mirages as beauty and pleasure; so would I enjoy the contemplation of that which interests me above all things: namely, Life: the force that ever strives

to attain greater power of contemplating itself. What made this brain of mine, do you think? Not the need to move my limbs; for a rat with half my brains moves as well as I. Not merely the need to do, but the need to know what I do, lest in my blind efforts to live I should be slaying myself.

Man and Superman, p. 105.

DON JUAN. Just as Life, after ages of struggle, evolved that wonderful bodily organ the eye, so that the living organism could see where it was going and what was coming to help or threaten it, and thus avoid a thousand dangers that formerly slew it, so it is evolving to-day a mind's eye that shall see, not the physical world, but the purpose of Life, and thereby enable the individual to work for that purpose instead of thwarting and baffling it by setting up shortsighted personal aims as at present.

Man and Superman, p. 115.

I HAVE a very poor opinion of London in its collective capacity. It is alike incapable of appreciating a benefit and of resenting an outrage. For example, one of the finest views in the world is within a minute's walk of Charing Cross. Go down Villiers Street and ascend the first stairs to your right after you pass the music hall. This brings you into the loggia attached to the wall of the South-Eastern terminus, and leading to the Hungerford footbridge. He who designed this loggia was no Orcagna, though he had such a chance as Orcagna never had in Florence. It is a dismal square hole in a mass of dirty bricks, through which men hurry with loathing. Yet if you look out through one of the holes—preferably the last but one—made for the convenience of the east wind, you will find the view magnificent. Right into one of the foci of that view, London, without a murmur, permitted Mr. Jabez

Balfour to dump the building which is now the Hotel Cecil, just as it allowed the London Pavilion Music-hall to spoil Piccadilly Circus. If that building had darkened the smallest window of a rag and bone shop, the proprietor thereof would have been supported by all the might of the State in maintaining his "Ancient Lights." But because all London—nay, all the world that visits London—was injured, there was no placard with "Ancient View" on it put up in that grimy loggia. If the malefactor had confined himself to injuring the public collectively, he would by this time have been one of our most eminent citizens. Unfortunately, he trifled with private property; and we instantly stretched out our hand to the uttermost parts of the earth whither he had fled; seized him; and cast him into prison. If the question had been one of beneficence instead of maleficence, we should have shewn the same hyperæsthesia to a pri-

vate advantage, the same anæsthesia to a public one.

The Saturday Review, 1st May 1897.

. . . the London in which the people who pay to be amused by my dramatic representation of Peter Shirley turned out to starve at forty because there are younger slaves to be had for his wages, do not take, and have not the slightest intention of taking, any effective step to organize society in such a way as to make that everyday infamy impossible.

Major Barbara, p. 178.

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LET realism have its demonstration, comedy its criticism, or even bawdry its horselaugh at the expense of sexual infatuation, if it must: but to ask us to subject our souls to its ruinous glamor, to worship it, deify it, and imply that it alone makes our life worth living, is nothing but folly gone mad erotically. **Love**

Three Plays for Puritans, p. xxix.

Think of how some of our married friends worry one another, tax one another, are jealous of one another, cant bear to let one another out of sight for a day, are more like jailers and slave-owners than lovers. Think of those very same people with their enemies, scrupulous, lofty, self-respecting, determined to be independent of one another, careful of how they speak of one another—pooh! havent you often thought that if they only knew it, they were better friends to their enemies than to their own husbands and wives?

The Devil's Disciple, p. 32.

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The Machine-Made Man

UNDERSHAFT. I want a man with no relations and no schooling: that is, a man who would be out of the running altogether if he were not a strong man. And I cant find him. Every blessed foundling nowadays is snapped up in his infancy by Barnardo homes, or School Board officers, or Boards of Guardians; and if he shews the least

ability, he is fastened on by schoolmasters; trained to win scholarships like a race-horse; crammed with second-hand ideas; drilled and disciplined in docility and what they call good taste; and lamed for life so that he is fit for nothing but teaching. *Major Barbara,* p. 275.

The Manicheism of Party Politics

GET on your legs and talk the current party Manicheism, according to which there are two great parties representing two great principles, the one wholly malign and the other wholly beneficent, composed of two different orders of beings, the one angelic and the other diabolic; and everything silly, everything drunken, infatuated, fanatical, envious, quarrelsome, in short, foolish in the audience responds to you at once. Assume, on the other hand, that one Government is very like another, and that nothing will wreck a Government except a refusal to go where it is driven, or an attempt to go where it is not driven (especially if the recalci-

trance be made a matter of party principle), and at once your audience is as happy and sensible as it is in the nature of an audience to be. But nobody at present combines the requisite political detachment with the requisite critical training except the art critic. I therefore look forward to the time when election meetings will be advertised by placards headed, "No Politics," and displaying a list of speakers headed, in the largest type, with the name of some noted critic of pictures, music, the drama, or literature. And the end of that will be that some bold editor will at last take the step I have vainly urged for years, and conduct the criticism of politics in his paper exactly as he now conducts the criticism of art.

The Saturday Review, 20th July 1895.

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Marat and Charlotte Corday

JEAN PAUL MARAT, "people's friend" and altruist *par excellence*, was a man just after our playgoers' own hearts—a man whose virtue consisted in

burning indignation at the sufferings of others and an intense desire to see them balanced by an exemplary retaliation. That is to say, his morality was the morality of the melodrama, and of the gallery which applauds frantically when the hero knocks the villain down. It is only by coarsely falsifying Marat's character that he has been made into an Adelphi villain—nay, prevented from bringing down the house as an Adelphi hero, as he certainly would if the audience could be shewn the horrors that provoked him and the personal disinterestedness and sincerity with which he threw himself into a war of extermination against tyranny. Ibsen may have earned the right to prove by the example of such men as Marat that these virtues were the making of a scoundrel more mischievous than the most openly vicious aristocrat for whose head he clamored; but the common run of our playgoers will have none of Ibsen's morality, and as much of Marat's as our

romantic dramatists can stuff them with. Charlotte Corday herself was simply a female Marat. She, too, hated tyranny and idealized her passionate instinct for bloody retaliation. There is the true tragic irony in Marat's death at her hand: it was not really murder: it was suicide—Marat slain by the spirit of Marat. No bad theme for a playwright capable of handling it! *The Saturday Review*, 5th February 1898.

Marriage

DON JUAN. Send me to the galleys and chain me to the felon whose number happens to be next to mine; and I must accept the inevitable and make the best of the companionship. Many such companionships, they tell me, are touchingly affectionate; and most are at least tolerably friendly. But that does not make a chain a desirable ornament nor the galleys an abode of bliss. Those who talk most about the blessings of marriage and the constancy of its vows are the very people who declare that if

the chain were broken and the prisoners left free to choose, the whole social fabric would fly asunder. You cannot have the argument both ways. If the prisoner is happy, why lock him in? If he is not, why pretend that he is?

Man and Superman, p. 122.

However much we may all suffer through marriage, most of us think so little about it that we regard it as a fixed part of the order of nature, like gravitation. Except for this error, which may be regarded as constant, we use the word with reckless looseness, meaning a dozen different things by it, and yet always assuming that to a respectable man it can have only one meaning. The pious citizen, suspecting the Socialist (for example) of unmentionable things, and asking him heatedly whether he wishes to abolish marriage, is infuriated by a sense of unanswerable quibbling when the Socialist asks him what particular variety of marriage he means: English civil

marriage, sacramental marriage, indissoluble Roman Catholic marriage, marriage of divorced persons, Scotch marriage, Irish marriage, French, German, Turkish, or South Dakotan marriage. In Norway and Sweden, two of the most highly civilized countries in the world, a marriage is dissolved if both parties wish it, without any question of conduct. That is what marriage means in Scandinavia. In Clapham that is what they call by the senseless name of Free Love. In the British Empire we have unlimited Kulin polygamy, Muslim polygamy limited to four wives, child marriages, and, nearer home, marriages of first cousins: all of them abominations in the eyes of many worthy persons. Not only may the respectable British champion of marriage mean any of these widely different institutions; sometimes he does not mean marriage at all. He means monogamy, chastity, temperance, respectability, morality, Christianity, anti-socialism, and a dozen other things that have no neces-

sary connection with marriage. He often means something that he dare not avow: ownership of the person of another human being, for instance. And he never tells the truth about his own marriage either to himself or anyone else. *Getting Married*, pp. 121, 122.

If we adopt the common romantic assumption that the object of marriage is bliss, then the very strongest reason for dissolving a marriage is that it shall be disagreeable to one or other or both of the parties. If we accept the view that the object of marriage is to provide for the production and rearing of children, then childlessness should be a conclusive reason for dissolution. As neither of these causes entitles married persons to divorce in England, it is at once clear that our marriage law is not founded on either assumption. What it is really founded on is the morality of the tenth commandment, which Englishwomen will one day succeed in obliterating from

the walls of our churches by refusing to enter any building where they are publicly classed with a man's house, his ox, and his ass, as his purchased chattels. *Getting Married*, p. 123.

It is remarkable that the very people who romance most absurdly about the closeness and sacredness of the marriage tie are also those who are most convinced that the man's sphere and the woman's sphere are so entirely separate that only in their leisure moments can they ever be together.

Getting Married, p. 140.

The common notion that the existing forms of marriage are not political contrivances, but sacred ethical obligations to which everything, even the very existence of the human race must be sacrificed if necessary (and this is what the vulgar morality we mostly profess on the subject comes to), is one on which no sane Government could act for a moment; and yet it influences, or is be-

lieved to influence, so many votes, that no Government will touch the marriage question if it can possibly help it.

Getting Married, p. 142.

The religious revolt against marriage is a very old one. Christianity began with a fierce attack on marriage; and to this day the celibacy of the Roman Catholic priesthood is a standing protest against its compatibility with the higher life. St. Paul's reluctant sanction of marriage; his personal protest that he countenanced if of necessity and against his own conviction; his contemptuous "better to marry than to burn" is only out of date in respect of his belief that the end of the world was at hand, and that there was therefore no longer any population question. His instinctive recoil from its worst aspect as a slavery to pleasure which induces two people to accept slavery to one another has remained an active force in the world to this day, and is now stirring more uneasily than ever.

Getting Married, pp. 126, 127.

I have never met anybody really in favor of maintaining marriage as it exists in England to-day. A Roman Catholic may obey his Church by assenting verbally to the doctrine of indissoluble marriage. But nobody worth counting believes directly, frankly, and instinctively that when a person commits a murder and is put into prison for twenty years for it, the free and innocent husband or wife of that murderer should remain bound by the marriage. To put it briefly, a contract for better for worse is a contract that should not be tolerated. *Getting Married*, p. 122.

The Marriage Laws

ABOUT twenty-six years ago a somewhat similar dilemma to that in Mr. Esmond's play (*The Divided Way*) arose between three persons no less famous than Wagner, Hans von Bulow, and Liszt's daughter, Cosima von Bulow. Madame von Bulow preferred to spend her life with Wagner, just as Mrs. Humeden in the play preferred to

spend her life with Gaunt. The change was effected with the happiest results: at least I am not aware that anybody was a penny the worse—certainly not Madame Wagner, who holds her court at Bayreuth with a dignity which many actual princesses might, and probably do, envy. Far be it from me to suggest anarchical violations of our marriage laws rather than an orderly agitation for constitutional reform of them in harmony with the higher morality of our own times; but I do venture to remark that people who decline to carry obedience to that law too far are at least as interesting dramatically as people who forge and murder, and that the notion that the consequences of such disobedience, when carried out in good faith by respectable people (George Eliot, for example), are necessarily so awful that suicide is the more reasonable alternative, is a piece of nonsense that might as well be dropped on the stage. No human institution could stand the strain of

the monstrous assumptions on which our existing marriage laws proceed if we were really sincere about them; and though there is much to be said for our English method of maintaining social order by collectively maintaining the sacredness of our moral ideals whilst we individually mitigate their severity by evasion, collusion, and never seeing anything until our attention is compelled by legal proceedings, yet the abuse of this system of toleration by people whose conduct we are not prepared to excuse, but who cannot very well be exposed if the excusable people are to be spared, is landing us in looser views than we ever bargained for. Already we have an aimlessly rebellious crusade against marriage altogether, and a curious habit of circumspection on the part of the experienced man of the world, who, when newly introduced to an English household, picks his way very cautiously until he has ascertained whether the husband and wife really would be husband

and wife in France or Germany or South Dakota, and, if his conclusion is unfavorable, which friend of the family is Mr. Gaunt Humeden, so to speak. Not that the domestic situations which are not white are all necessarily jet black or even disagreeably grey; but the fact that under the English law a mistake in marriage cannot be effectively remedied except by the disgrace of either party—that is to say, cannot be remedied at all by decent people, divorce being thus a boon reserved for the dissolute—is continually producing a supply of cases not at all dissimilar to that which is the subject of Mr. Esmond's play. Most of them are settled, not by suicide, nor by flights into Egypt, but by the parties drifting along, nobody doing anything wrong, and nobody doing anything right, all seeing enough of one another to make them contented *faute de mieux,* whilst maintaining their honor intact. Whether this customary and convenable solution is really better—say in its effect on the children who

grow up observing it—than the violent method of open scandal and collusory divorce, involving the public announcement of cruelties and adulteries which have never been committed, is an open question, not admitting of a general answer. Obviously, the ideal husband and wife who give all their affection to one another, and maintain a state of cold indifference to everyone else, should be executed without benefit of clergy as a couple of heartless monopolists; for the idealist may be safely challenged to produce a single instance of a thoroughly happy marriage in which the affection which makes the marriage happy does not extend to a wide circle of friends. Just as good mothers and fathers love all lovable children, so good wives and husbands love all lovable husbands and wives. People with this gift of heart are not prevented from marrying by Don Juan's difficulty: they can be faithful to one without being unfaithful to all the rest. Unfortunately, they are no

more common than the domestic terrors who are utterly incapable of living with anybody on tolerable terms. Family life may mean anything between these two extremes, from that of the southern countries where the guide-book warns the English tourist that if he asks a man after his wife's health he will probably be challenged to fight a duel, or that of the English stage, where the same evil construction is maintained on the same pretence of jealousy for private morality and the honor of womanhood, to the most cultivated sections of English and American society, where people think of our existing marriage law much as Matthew Arnold thought about Tennyson, and unfortunately keep their opinion to themselves with equal "good taste." The practical result is, superhuman pretension, extravagant hypocrisy, tolerance of every sort of misconduct—provided it is clandestine, and, of course, a conspiracy of silence. *The Saturday Review,* 30th November 1895.

Marriage and the Reformation

WHEN the great protest of the sixteenth century came, and the Church was reformed in several countries, the Reformation was so largely a rebellion against sacerdotalism that marriage was very nearly excommunicated again, as it had been by the early Christians: our modern civil marriage, round which so many fierce controversies and political conflicts have raged, would have been thoroughly approved of by Calvin, and hailed with relief by Luther. But the instinctive doctrine that there is something holy and mystic in sex, a doctrine which many of us now easily dissociate from any priestly ceremony, but which in those days seemed to all who felt it to need a ritual affirmation, could not be thrown on the scrap-heap with the sale of Indulgences and the like; and so the Reformation left marriage where it was: a curious mixture of commercial sex slavery, early Christian sex abhorrence, and later Christian sex sanctification. *Getting Married*, p. 196.

MATERIALISM only isolated the great mystery of consciousness by clearing away several petty mysteries with which we had confused it; just as rationalism isolated the great mystery of the will to live. The isolation made both more conspicuous than before. We thought we had escaped for ever from the cloudy region of metaphysics; and we were only carried further into the heart of them.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, p. 14.

Ibsen's writings shew how well he knew the crushing weight with which the sordid cares of the ordinary struggle for money and respectability fell on the world when the romance of the creeds was discredited, and progress seemed for the moment to mean, not the growth of the spirit of man, but an effect of the survival of the fittest brought about by the destruction of the unfit, all the most frightful examples of this systematic destruction being thrust into the utmost

prominence by those who were fighting the Church with Mill's favorite dialectical weapon, the incompatibility of divine omnipotence with divine benevolence. His plays are full of evidence of his overwhelming sense of the necessity of rousing the individual into self-assertion against this numbing fatalism; and yet he never seems to have freed his intellect wholly from the acceptance of its scientific validity. That it only accounted for progress at all on the hypothesis of a continuous increase in the severity of the conditions of existence—that is, on an assumption of just the reverse of what was actually taking place—appears to have escaped Ibsen as completely as it has escaped Professor Huxley himself. It is true that he did not allow himself to be stopped by this gloomy fortress of pessimism and materialism: his genius pushed him past it, but without intellectually reducing it; and the result is, that as far as one can guess, he went on believing it impregnable, not dreaming

that it has been demolished, and that too with ridiculous ease, by the mere march behind him of the working class, which, by its freedom from the characteristic bias of the middle classes, has escaped their characteristic illusions, and solved many of the enigmas which they found insoluble because they wished to find them so. His prophetic belief in the spontaneous growth of the will makes him a meliorist without reference to the operation of natural selection; but his impression of the light thrown by physical and biological science on the facts of life seems to be the gloomy one of the period at which he must have received his education in these departments. External nature often plays her most ruthless and destructive part in his works, which have an extraordinary fascination for the pessimists of that school, in spite of the incompatibility of his individualism with that mechanical utilitarian ethic of theirs which treats Man as the sport

of every circumstance, and ignores his will altogether.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, pp. 63, 64.

Maternity

PLATO long ago pointed out the importance of being governed by men with a sufficient sense of responsibility and comprehension of public duties to be very reluctant to undertake the work of governing; and yet we have taken his instruction so little to heart that we are at present suffering acutely from government by gentlemen who will stoop to all the mean shifts of electioneering and incur all its heavy expenses for the sake of a seat in Parliament. But what our sentimentalists have not yet been told is that exactly the same thing applies to maternity as to government. The best mothers are not those who are so enslaved by their primitive instincts that they will bear children no matter how hard the conditions are, but precisely those who place a very high price on their services, and are quite

prepared to become old maids if the price is refused, and even to feel relieved at their escape. Our democratic and matrimonial institutions may have their merits: at all events they are mostly reforms of something worse; but they put a premium on want of self-respect in certain very important matters; and the consequence is that we are very badly governed and are, on the whole, an ugly, mean, ill-bred race. *Getting Married,* pp. 153, 154.

Meat and Drink

A COMPARISON of the works of our carnivorous drunkard poets with those of Shelley, or of Dr. Johnson's dictionary with that of the vegetarian Littré, is sufficient to shew that the secret of attaining the highest eminence either in poetry or in dictionary compiling (and all fine literature lies between the two), is to be found neither in alcohol nor in our monstrous habit of bringing millions of useless and disagreeable animals into existence for the

express purpose of barbarously slaughtering them, roasting their corpses, and eating them. On Going to Church. *The Savoy,* January 1896, pp. 16, 17.

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The Medical Profession

NOTHING is more dangerous than a poor doctor: not even a poor employer or a poor landlord. *The Doctor's Dilemma,* p. xci.

It is not the fault of our doctors that the medical service of the community, as at present provided for, is a murderous absurdity. That any sane nation, having observed that you could provide for the supply of bread by giving bakers a pecuniary interest in baking for you, should go on to give a surgeon a pecuniary interest in cutting off your leg, is enough to make one despair of political humanity. But that is precisely what we have done. And the more appalling the mutilation, the more the mutilator is paid. He who corrects the ingrowing toe-nail receives a few shillings: he who

cuts your inside out receives hundreds of guineas, except when he does it to a poor person for practice.
Scandalized voices murmur that these operations are necessary. They may be. It may also be necessary to hang a man or pull down a house. But we take good care not to make the hangman and the housebreaker the judges of that. If we did, no man's neck would be safe and no man's house stable. But we do make the doctor the judge, and fine him anything from sixpence to several hundred guineas if he decides in our favour. *The Doctor's Dilemma,* p. v.

Doctors are just like other Englishmen: most of them have no honor and no conscience: what they commonly mistake for these is sentimentality and an intense dread of doing anything that everybody else does not do, or omitting to do anything that everybody else does. This of course does amount to a sort of work-

ing or rule-of-thumb conscience; but it means that you will do anything, good or bad, provided you get enough people to keep you in countenance by doing it also. It is the sort of conscience that makes it possible to keep order on a pirate ship, or in a troop of brigands.

The Doctor's Dilemma, p. viii.

No doctor dare accuse another of malpractice. He is not sure enough of his own opinion to ruin another man by it. He knows that if such conduct were tolerated in his profession no doctor's livelihood or reputation would be worth a year's purchase. I do not blame him: I should do the same myself. But the effect of this state of things is to make the medical profession a conspiracy to hide its own shortcomings. No doubt the same may be said of all professions. They are all conspiracies against the laity; and I do not suggest that the medical conspiracy is either better or worse than the military conspiracy, the

legal conspiracy, the sacerdotal conspiracy, the pedagogic conspiracy, the royal and aristocratic conspiracy, the literary and artistic conspiracy, and the innumerable industrial, commercial, and financial conspiracies, from the trade unions to the great exchanges, which make up the huge conflict which we call society. But it is less suspected. *The Doctor's Dilemma,* pp. xiv., xv.

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Melodrama

UNFORTUNATELY, a really good Adelphi melodrama is very hard to get. It should be a simple and sincere drama of action and feeling, kept well within that vast tract of passion and motives which is common to the philosopher and the laborer, relieved by plenty of fun, and depending for variety of human character, not on the high comedy idiosyncrasies which individualize people in spite of the closest similarity of age, sex, and circumstances, but on broad contrasts between types of youth and age, sympathy and selfishness, the

masculine and the feminine, the serious and the frivolous, the sublime and the ridiculous, and so on. The whole character of the piece must be allegorical, idealistic, full of generalizations and moral lessons; and it must represent conduct as producing swiftly and certainly on the individual the results which in actual life it only produces on the race in the course of many centuries. All of which, obviously, requires for its accomplishment rather greater heads and surer hands than we commonly find in the service of the playhouse. *The Saturday Review,* 20th April 1895.

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Methods of Reform

I DO not approve of private property in land, and I regard the appropriation of the ground rent of London by the present ground landlords as grossly inequitable; but were I asked on that account to finance a burglary in the Duke of Westminster's house, I should refuse. I am constantly teaching people that they must reform society before

they can reform themselves, and that individual sallies of rebellion are useless and suicidal. *Correspondence.*

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Middle Class Unsociability

THE whole difficulty of bringing up a family well is the difficulty of making its members behave as considerately at home as on a visit in a strange house, and as frankly, kindly, and easily in a strange house as at home. In the middle classes, where the segregation of the artificially limited family in its little brick box is horribly complete, bad manners, ugly dresses, awkwardness, cowardice, peevishness, and all the petty vices of unsociability flourish like mushrooms in a cellar. In the upper class, where families are not limited for money reasons; where at least two houses and sometimes three or four are the rule (not to mention the clubs); where there is travelling and hotel life; and where the men are brought up, not in the family, but in public schools, universities, and the naval and military

services, besides being constantly in social training in other people's houses, the result is to produce what may be called, in comparison with the middle class, something that might almost pass as a different and much more sociable species. And in the very poorest class, where people have no homes, only sleeping places, and consequently live practically in the streets, sociability again appears, leaving the middle class despised and disliked for its helpless and offensive unsociability as much by those below it as those above it, and yet ignorant enough to be proud of it, and to hold itself up as a model for the reform of the (as it considers) elegantly vicious rich and profligate poor alike. *Getting Married,* pp. 169, 170.

Might and Right

THERE is no more identity or necessary connection between might and right than between chalk and cheese. Every man strives for might so that his will may prevail; and when he attains

it his will prevails whether it is right or wrong. That Will, like gravitation, is a force in itself, is true; and that the human race cannot really will its own destruction is a thing that we may at least hope for on the ground that it manages to survive. But under the rule of a standard Morality evolution is limited by the fact that at a certain point of development the individual in whom the advance is manifested (say the Superman) is attacked and destroyed in the name of Right by the other less developed individuals; so that in effect the race does will its own destruction on the plane of the Superman. And the attack presents itself to these less developed ones as an attack of right on might; for to the ordinary citizen right means thinking as he does; and the Superman who goes deeper than he into morals is just as much a rascal to him as the criminal who does not go so deep. It seems clear, therefore, that the only chance for the Superman is to acquire

sufficient might to defy the efforts of the average respectable man to destroy him. Hitherto these attempts have not been successful on the physical plane. Napoleon's military system finally reduced itself to absurdity, and forced the dufferdom of Europe to combine and destroy him. Cæsar, with immense social talents and moral gifts in addition to moral capacity, bribed the masses into tolerating him, but was killed by a conspiracy of "good" men who killed him on principle as a protest of right against might. So much for the Superman of action! As to the Superman who merely writes and talks, he escapes because nobody understands him. "The triumph of his principles" means their degradation to the common level, the mob accepting his teaching just as a cannibal accepts the teaching of St. John or an Oxford undergraduate the philosophy of Plato or the poetry of Euripides. *The Nationalist, September,* 1903.

THE soldier always begs to be allowed to kill everybody who could possibly kill him in order that he may sheathe his sword for ever. And who shall blame him? But it is one thing not to blame a poor bedevilled, but logical, military fellow-creature who pays with his skin for the murderous arrogance of the fat citizens who skulk on their tight little island behind the guns of the fleet, clamoring for the blood of their neighbors. It is quite another to make his bedevilled logic the policy of your Empire. Civilization and the Soldier. *The Humane Review,* January 1901, p. 309.

No man who has learnt a short and apparently effectual way of disposing of political difficulties will ever have patience to forego that method. Cromwell's way with Ireland, Napoleon's way with Europe, is finally every capable soldier's way everywhere. A soldier has no other policy; and to make

him your counsellor is to relinquish all choice of policy. Civilization and the Soldier. *The Humane Review*, January 1901, p. 310.

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Miracles

THAT definition of a miracle as "the Divine Will overcoming the mere rule in things" is not bad. But surely the rule is that the Divine Will (my will and yours) can overcome everything finally, though it has to will pretty hard to do it, and overcomes nothing on the cheap, as your vulgar worshipper with his beggar's prayers would like to believe. *The New Age*, 7th January 1909.

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Money

MONEY is indeed the most important thing in the world; and all sound and successful personal and national morality should have this fact for its basis. Every teacher or twaddler who denies it or suppresses it, is an enemy of life. Money controls moral-

ity; and what makes the United States of America look so foolish even in foolish Europe is that they are always in a state of flurried concern and violent interference with morality, whereas they throw their money into the street to be scrambled for, and presently find that their cash reserves are not in their own hands, but in the pockets of a few millionaires who, bewildered by their luck, and unspeakably incapable of making any truly economic use of it, endeavor to "do good" with it by letting themselves be fleeced by philanthropic committee men, building contractors, librarians and professors, in the name of education, science, art and what not; so that sensible people exhale relievedly when the pious millionaire dies, and his heirs, demoralized by being brought up on his outrageous income, begin the socially beneficent work of scattering his fortune through the channels of the trades that flourish by riotous living.

The Irrational Knot, p. xiv.

Money is the most important thing in the world. It represents health, strength, honor, generosity and beauty as conspicuously and undeniably as the want of it represents illness, weakness, disgrace, meanness and ugliness. Not the least of its virtues is that it destroys base people as certainly as it fortifies and dignifies noble people. It is only when it is cheapened to worthlessness for some, and made impossibly dear to others, that it becomes a curse. In short, it is a curse only in such foolish social conditions that life itself is a curse. For the two things are inseparable: money is the counter that enables life to be distributed socially: it *is* life as truly as sovereigns and bank notes are money. The first duty of every citizen is to insist on having money on reasonable terms; and this demand is not complied with by giving four men three shillings each for ten or twelve hours' drudgery and one man a thousand pounds for nothing. The crying need

of the nation is not for better morals, cheaper bread, temperance, liberty, culture, redemption of fallen sisters and erring brothers, nor the grace, love and fellowship of the Trinity, but simply for enough money. And the evil to be attacked is not sin, suffering, greed, priestcraft, kingcraft, demagogy, monopoly, ignorance, drink, war, pestilence, nor any of the scapegoats which reformers sacrifice, but simply poverty. *Major Barbara*, p. 171.

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Morality

YOUR morals are only your habits: do not call other people immoral because they have other habits. *Correspondence.*

Morality means custom; and it is custom that tyrannizes over most people's minds. *Correspondence.*

The Irrational Knot is one of those fictions in which the morality is original and not readymade. Now this quality

is the true diagnostic of the first order in literature and indeed in all the arts, including the art of life. It is, for example, the distinction that sets Shakespear's *Hamlet* above his other plays, and that sets Ibsen's work as a whole above Shakespear's work as a whole. Shakespear's morality is a mere reach-me-down; and because Hamlet does not feel comfortable in it, and struggles against the misfit, he suggests something better, futile as his struggle is, and incompetent as Shakespear shews himself in his effort to think out the revolt of his feeling against readymade morality. Ibsen's morality is original all through; he knows well that the men in the street have no use for principles, because they can neither understand nor apply them; and that what they can understand and apply are arbitrary rules of conduct, often frightfully destructive and inhuman, but at least definite rules enabling the common stupid man to know where he stands and what he may do and not

do without getting into trouble. Now to all writers of the first order, these rules, and the need for them produced by the moral and intellectual incompetence of the ordinary human animal, are no more invariably beneficial and respectable than the sunlight which ripens the wheat in Sussex and leaves the desert deadly in Sahara, making the cheeks of the ploughman's child rosy in the morning and striking the ploughman brainsick or dead in the afternoon; no more inspired (and no less) than the religion of the Andaman islanders; as much in need of frequent throwing away and replacement as the community's boots. By writers of the second order the readymade morality is accepted as the basis of all moral judgment and criticism of the characters they portray, even when their genius forces them to represent their most attractive heroes and heroines as violating the readymade code in all directions.

The Irrational Knot, pp. xxii., xxiii.

No man who shuts his eyes and opens his mouth when religion and morality are offered to him on a long spoon can share the same Parnassian bench with those who make an original contribution to religion and morality, were it only a criticism. *The Irrational Knot,* p. xxiv.

The statement that Ibsen's plays have an immoral tendency, is, in the sense in which it is used, quite true. Immorality does not necessarily imply mischievous conduct: it implies conduct, mischievous or not, which does not conform to current ideals. Since Ibsen has devoted himself almost entirely to shewing that the spirit or will of Man is constantly outgrowing his ideals, and that therefore conformity to them is constantly producing results no less tragic than those which follow the violation of ideals which are still valid, the main effect of his plays is to keep before the public the importance of being al-

ways prepared to act immorally, to remind men that they ought to be as careful how they yield to a temptation to tell the truth as to a temptation to hold their tongues, and to urge upon women that the desirability of their preserving their chastity depends just as much on circumstances as the desirability of taking a cab instead of walking. He protests against the ordinary assumption that there are certain supreme ends which justify all means used to attain them; and insists that every end shall be challenged to show that it justifies the means. Our ideals, like the gods of old, are constantly demanding human sacrifices. Let none of them, says Ibsen, be placed above the obligation to prove that they are worth the sacrifices they demand; and let everyone refuse to sacrifice himself and others from the moment he loses his faith in the reality of the ideal. *Quintessence of Ibsenism,* pp. 136, 137.

There can be no question as to the effect likely to be produced on an individual by his conversion from the ordinary acceptance of current ideals as safe standards of conduct, to the vigilant open-mindedness of Ibsen. It must at once greatly deepen his sense of moral responsibility. Before conversion the individual anticipates nothing worse in the way of examination at the judgment bar of his conscience than such questions as Have you kept the commandments? Have you obeyed the law? Have you attended church regularly? paid your rates and taxes to Cæsar? and contributed, in reason, to charitable institutions? It may be hard to do all these things; but it is still harder not to do them, as our ninety-nine moral cowards in the hundred well know. And even a scoundrel can do them all and yet live a worse life than the smuggler or prostitute who must answer No all through the catechism. *Quintessence of Ibsenism,* pp. 137, 138.

NAPOLEON. There are three sorts of people in the world, the low people, the middle people, and the high people. The low people and the high people are alike in one thing: they have no scruples, no morality. The low are beneath morality, the high above it. I am not afraid of either of them; for the low are unscrupulous without knowledge, so that they make an idol of me; whilst the high are unscrupulous without purpose, so that they go down before my will. Look you: I shall go over all the mobs and all the courts of Europe as a plough goes over a field. It is the middle people who are dangerous: they have both knowledge and purpose. But they, too, have their weak point. They are full of scruples—chained hand and foot by their morality and respectability. *The Man of Destiny*, pp. 211, 212.

Morality and Censorships

WHATEVER is contrary to established manners and customs is immoral. An immoral act or doctrine is

not necessarily a sinful one: on the contrary, every advance in thought and conduct is by definition immoral until it has converted the majority. For this reason it is of the most enormous importance that immorality should be protected jealously against the attacks of those who have no standard except the standard of custom, and who regard any attack on custom—that is, on morals—as an attack on society, on religion, and on virtue.

A censor is never intentionally a protector of immorality. He always aims at the protection of morality. Now morality is extremely valuable to society. It imposes conventional conduct on the great mass of persons who are incapable of original ethical judgment, and who would be quite lost if they were not in leading-strings devised by lawgivers, philosophers, prophets, and poets for their guidance. But morality is not dependent on censorship for protection. It is already powerfully fortified by the

magistracy and the whole body of law. Blasphemy, indecency, libel, treason, sedition, obscenity, profanity, and all the other evils which a censorship is supposed to avert are punishable by the civil magistrate with all the severity of vehement prejudice. Morality has not only every engine that lawgivers can devise in full operation for its protection, but also that enormous weight of public opinion enforced by social ostracism which is stronger than all the statutes. A censor pretending to protect morality is like a child pushing the cushions of a railway carriage to give itself the sensation of making the train travel at sixty miles an hour. It is immorality, not morality, that needs protection: it is morality, not immorality, that needs restraint; for morality, with all the dead weight of human inertia and superstition to hang on the back of the pioneer, and all the malice of vulgarity and prejudice to threaten him, is responsible for many persecutions and many martyr-

doms. *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet*, pp. 346, 347.

Moral Passion

TANNER. The change that came to me at thirteen was the birth in me of moral passion; and I declare that according to my experience moral passion is the only real passion.

ANN. All passions ought to be moral, Jack.

TANNER. Ought! Do you think that anything is strong enough to impose oughts on a passion except a stronger passion still?

ANN. Our moral sense controls passion, Jack. Don't be stupid.

TANNER. Our moral sense! And is that not a passion? Is the devil to have all the passions as well as all the good tunes? If it were not a passion —if it were not the mightiest of the passions, all the other passions would sweep it away like a leaf before a hurricane. It is the birth of that passion

that turns a child into a man. *Man and Superman*, p. 35.

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Motherhood

WHY the bees should pamper their mothers whilst we pamper only our operatic prima donnas is a question worth reflecting on. Our notion of treating a mother is, not to increase her supply of food, but to cut it off by forbidding her to work in a factory for a month after her confinement. Everything that can make birth a misfortune to the parents as well as a danger to the mother is conscientiously done. *Man and Superman*, p. 199.

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Mothers and the State

DR. —— turns up his nose at the State. "Anything less like a mother than the State I find it hard to imagine." He may well say so. When the State left the children to the mothers, they got no schooling; they were sent out to work under inhuman

conditions underground and overground for atrociously long hours as soon as they were able to walk; they died of typhus fever in heaps; they grew up to be as wicked to their own children as their parents had been to them. State Socialism rescued them from the worst of that, and means to rescue them from all of it. I now publicly challenge Dr. —— to propose, if he dares, to withdraw the hand of the State and abandon the children to their mothers as before. At present mothers cannot afford to take care of their children; and the State can. *The Pall Mall Gazette,* 2nd December 1907.

Municipal Trading

LET us imagine a city in which the poor rates, police rates and sanitary rates are very low, and the children in the schools flourishing and of full weight, whilst all the public services of the city are municipalized and conducted without a farthing of profit, or even

with occasional deficits made up out of the rates. Suppose another city in which all the public services are in the hands of flourishing joint stock companies paying from 7 to 21 per cent, and in which the workhouses, the prisons, the hospitals, the sanitary inspectors, the disinfectors and strippers and cleansers are all as busy as the joint stock companies, whilst the schools are full of rickety children. According to the commercial test, the second town would be a triumphant proof of the prosperity brought by private enterprise, and the first a dreadful example of the bankruptcy of municipal trade. But which town would a wise man rather pay rates in? The very shareholders of the companies in the second town would take care to live in the first. And what chance would a European State consisting of towns of the second type have in a struggle for survival with a State of the first? *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading,* p. 39.

Suppose the drink trade were debited with what it costs in disablement, inefficiency, illness and crime, with all their depressing effects on industrial productivity, and with their direct cost in doctors, policemen, prisons, etc., etc., etc.! Suppose at the same time the municipal highways and bridges account were credited with the value of the time and wear and tear saved by them! It would at once appear that the roads and bridges pay for themselves many times over, whilst the pleasures of drunkenness are costly beyond all reason. *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading,* p. 19.

If a municipality owned all the land within its jurisdiction, it would still have to make the occupiers, including its own departments, pay rent in proportion to the commercial or residential desirability of their holdings; but it could pool the total rent and establish a "moral minimum" of house accommodation at

a "fair rent" on a perfectly sound economic basis. *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading*, p. 72.

The sudden reintroduction of competition by a new departure—for example the tube railway suddenly upsetting the monopoly of the old underground in London—always brings down prices, a fact which proves that private enterprise maintains the highest price that will pay instead of the lowest. This tendency is clearly an anti-social one. *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading*, p. 52.

Now the all important difference between the position of the commercial investor and the ratepayer is that whilst the commercial investor has no responsibility for the laborers whom he employs beyond paying them their wages whilst they are working for him, the ratepayer is responsible for their subsistence from the cradle to the grave. *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading*, p. 20.

Municipal Trading seems a very simple matter of business. Yet it is conceivable by a sensible man that the political struggle over it may come nearer to a civil war than any issue raised in England since the Reform Bill of 1832.
The Common Sense of Municipal Trading, p. 1.

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Nationalism

DOYLE. Hes a Nationalist and a Separatist. I'm a metallurgical chemist turned civil engineer. Now whatever else metallurgical chemistry may be, it's not national. It's international. And my business and yours as civil engineers is to join countries, not to separate them. The one real political conviction that our business has rubbed into us is that frontiers are hindrances and flags confounded nuisances.
John Bull's Other Island, p. 22.

A healthy nation is as unconscious of its nationality as a healthy man of his bones. But if you break a nation's na-

tionality it will think of nothing else but getting it set again. It will listen to no reformer, to no philosopher, to no preacher, until the demand of the Nationalist is granted. It will attend to no business, however vital, except the business of unification and liberation.
John Bull's Other Island, Preface, p. xxxvi.

The business of Socialism is the organization of the highly evolved industrial communities now politically represented by the great Powers, and not this nonsensical shouting of the political woes of Poland, Ireland, and the Transvaal with their obsolete ideals, their obscurantist religions, their communities of ignorant farmers or depressed laborers, and their unintelligent and bigoted individualism. Socialists are not in the habit of pitying Western Europe because Napoleon conquered it, or England because Julius Cæsar conquered it.
Correspondence.

I am not myself an Englishman but an Irishman; and all my national prejudice is anti-English. But one of the first things Socialism taught me was that national prejudices are not politics. *Correspondence.*

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Nice People

"I CANNOT understand why she is so unlucky: she is such a nice woman!": that is the formula. As if people with any force in them ever were altogether nice! *The Irrational Knot,* p. xxiv.

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The Nineteenth Century

IT is reserved for some great critic to give us a study of the psychology of the nineteenth century. Those of us who as adults saw it face to face in that last moiety of its days when one fierce hand after another—Marx's, Zola's, Ibsen's, Strindberg's, Turgenief's, Tolstoy's—stripped its masks off and revealed it as, on the whole, perhaps the most villainous page of recorded human history, can also recall the strange con-

fidence with which it regarded itself as the very summit of civilization, and talked of the past as a cruel gloom that had been dispelled for ever by the railway and the electric telegraph.
Three Plays by Brieux, Preface, p. viii.

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Not What They Like, but What is Good for Them

WHEN the popular tribune demands "good words" from Coriolanus, he replies, "He that will give good words to thee will flatter beneath abhorring"; and no great play can ever be written by a man who will allow the public to dictate to him. Even if the public really knew what it likes and what it dislikes—a consummation of wisdom which it is as far from as any child—the true master-dramatist would still give it, not what it likes, but what is good for it. *The Saturday Review*, 7th December 1895.

It is true that the public consists largely of people who are incapable of fully ap-

preciating the best sort of artistic work. It is even true that in every audience, especially on first nights, there is an appreciable number of persons whose condition is such that—to turn Tennyson's shallow claptrap into a terrible truth—they needs must hate the highest when they see it. But why should we credit these unhappy persons with that attribute of the highest character, the power of liking what pleases them, of believing in it, of standing by those who give it to them? For the most part they never enjoy anything; they are always craving for stimulants, whereas the essence of art is recreation; let their flatterer slip, as he always does sooner or later, and they are at his throat mercilessly before he can recover himself. But if you speak in their hearing as the great men speak (which is easy enough if you happen to be a great man), then you will find that their specialty is self-torture, and that they are always hankering, in spite of themselves, after their

own boredom and bewilderment, driven, probably, by some sort of uneasy hope that Ibsen or Wagner or some other gigantic bore may exorcize the devils which rend them. The fact is, there is nothing the public despises so much as an attempt to please it. Torment is its natural element: it is only the saint who has any capacity for happiness. There is no greater mistake in theology than to suppose that it is necessary to lock people into hell or out of heaven. You might as well suppose that it is necessary to lock a professional tramp into a public-house or out of a Monday popular concert, on the ground that the concert is the better and cheaper place of the two. The artist's rule must be Cromwell's: "Not what they want, but what is good for them." That rule, carried out in a kindly and sociable way, is the secret to success in the long run at the theatre as elsewhere. *The Saturday Review*, 20th April 1895.

Observations

THE philanthropist is a parasite on misery. *Man and Superman*, p. 211.

Necessity, ever ironical towards Folly. *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. xii.

Obsolete Institutions

YOU have made for yourself something that you call a morality or a religion or what not. It doesnt fit the facts. Well, scrap it. Scrap it and get one that does fit. That is what is wrong with the world at present. It scraps its obsolete steam engines and dynamos; but it wont scrap its old prejudices and its old moralities and its old religions and its old political constitutions. Whats the result? In machinery it does very well; but in morals and religion and politics it is working at a loss that brings it nearer bankruptcy every year. Dont persist in that folly. If your old religion broke down yesterday, get a newer and a better one for to-morrow. *Major Barbara*, p. 297.

Enough, then, of this goose-cackle about Progress: Man, as he is, never will nor can add a cubit to his stature by any of its quackeries, political, scientific, educational, religious, or artistic. What is likely to happen when this conviction gets into the minds of the men whose present faith in these illusions is the cement of our social system, can be imagined only by those who know how suddenly a civilization which has long ceased to think (or in the old phrase, to watch and pray) can fall to pieces when the vulgar belief in its hypocrisies and impostures can no longer hold out against its failures and scandals. When religious and ethical formulæ become so obsolete that no man of strong mind can believe them, they have also reached the point at which no man of high character will profess them; and from that moment until they are formally disestablished, they stand at the door of every profession and every public office to keep out every able man who is not

a sophist or a liar. A nation which revises its parish councils once in three years, but will not revise its articles of religion once in three hundred, even when those articles avowedly began as a political compromise, dictated by Mr. Facing-Both-Ways, is a nation that needs remaking. *Man and Superman*, pp. 217, 218.

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Oscar Wilde's Plays

IN a certain sense Mr. Oscar Wilde is to me our only thorough playwright. He plays with everything: with wit, with philosophy, with drama, with actors and audience, with the whole theatre. Such a feat scandalizes the Englishman, who can no more play with wit and philosophy than he can with a football or a cricket bat. He works at both, and has the consolation, if he cannot make people laugh, of being the best cricketer and footballer in the world. Now it is the mark of the artist that he will not work. Just as people with social ambitions will practise

the meanest economies in order to live expensively; so the artist will starve his way through incredible toil and discouragement sooner than go and earn a week's honest wages. Mr. Wilde, an arch-artist, is so colossally lazy that he trifles even with the work by which an artist escapes work. He distils the very quintessence, and gets as product plays which are so unapproachably playful that they are the delight of every playgoer with twopenn'orth of brains. The English critic always protesting that the drama should not be didactic, and yet always complaining if the dramatist does not find sermons in stones and good in everything, will be conscious of a subtle and pervading levity in An Ideal Husband. All the literary dignity of the play, all the imperturbable good sense and good manners with which Mr. Wilde makes his wit pleasant to his comparatively stupid audience, cannot quite overcome the fact that Ireland is of all countries the most foreign to England,

and that to the Irishman (and Mr. Wilde is almost as acutely Irish an Irishman as the Iron Duke of Wellington) there is nothing in the world quite so exquisitely comic as an Englishman's seriousness. It becomes tragic, perhaps, when the Englishman acts on it; but that occurs too seldom to be taken into account, a fact which intensifies the humor of the situation, the total result being the Englishman utterly unconscious of his real self, Mr. Wilde keenly observant of it and playing on the self-unconsciousness with irresistible humor, and finally, of course, the Englishman annoyed with himself for being amused at his own expense, and for being unable to convict Mr. Wilde of what seems an obvious misunderstanding of human nature. He is shocked, too, at the danger to the foundations of society when seriousness is publicly laughed at. And to complete the oddity of the situation, Mr. Wilde, touching what he himself reverences, is abso-

lutely the most sentimental dramatist of the day. *The Saturday Review,* 12th January 1895.

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Parasitic Trades

THERE are English parasitic industries which are wholly bad—in which nearly all the work is done by lads and lasses who are not getting a living wage and are yet putting in a full day's work and eating more than an adult to keep themselves growing. Such industries are really supported by the young people's parents. The young people's employers are sucking the blood of the industry which pays the parents' wages. That is what is at the bottom of the demand for a legal minimum wage for all workers in the country. Bernard Shaw as a Clerk. *The Clerk,* February 1908, p. 21.

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The Passions

IF "the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," then, truly, the man who allows himself

to be guided by his passions must needs be a scoundrel; and the teachers who advise such guidance might well be slain by his parents. But how if the youth thrown helpless on his passions found that honesty, that self-respect, that hatred of cruelty and injustice, that the desire for soundness and health and efficiency were master passions: nay, that their excess is so dangerous to youth that it is part of the wisdom of age to say to the young: "Be not righteous overmuch: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" On the other hand, the people who profess to renounce and abjure their own passions, and ostentatiously regulate their conduct by the most convenient interpretation of what the Bible means, or, worse still, by their ability to find reasons for it (as if there were not excellent reasons to be found for every conceivable course of conduct, from dynamiting and vivisection to martyrdom), seldom need a warning against being righteous overmuch, their

attention, indeed, often needing a rather pressing jog in the opposite direction. Passion is the steam in the engine of all religious and moral systems. In so far as it is malevolent, the religions are malevolent too, and insist on human sacrifices, on hell, wrath, and vengeance.

The Sanity of Art, pp. 42, 44.

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The Peace Which Passeth all Understanding

MORELL. Man can climb to the highest summits; but he cannot dwell there long.

MARCHBANKS. It's false: there can he dwell for ever, and there only. It's in the other moments that he can find no rest, no sense of the silent glory of life. Where would you have me spend my moments, if not on the summits?

Candida, p. 144.

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Personal

WHEN, in addressing an ordinary religious audience, I have occasion to speak of the force which they call the Will of God, and which I my-

self have called the Life Force, I use the term which is familiar and intelligible to them. The force in question is as obvious a reality to me as magnetism or gravitation; and I had very much rather be misunderstood as accepting some of its legendary associations than as denying or reckoning without its existence. But as a matter of fact, my references to it are always accompanied by other observations which could not possibly be taken as proceeding from an ordinary Evangelical. I hope to define my views on this subject more precisely in a book entirely devoted to them; but should anything prevent me from accomplishing this design, the third Act of Man and Superman will remain on record as a statement of my creed. *Correspondence.*

I am a moral revolutionary, interested, not in the class war, but in the struggle between human vitality and the artificial system of morality; and distinguishing,

not between capitalist and proletarian, but between moralist and natural historian. *Correspondence.*

For my own part, if I do not care to rhapsodize much about Mozart, it is because I am so violently prepossessed in his favor that I am capable of supplying any possible deficiency in his work by my imagination. Gounod has devoutly declared that Don Giovanni has been to him all his life a revelation of perfection, a miracle, a work without fault. I smile indulgently at Gounod, since I cannot afford to give myself away so generously (there being, no doubt, less of me); but I am afraid my fundamental attitude towards Mozart is the same as his. In my small boyhood I by good luck had an opportunity of learning the Don thoroughly; and if it were only for the sense of the value of fine workmanship which I gained from it, I should still esteem that lesson the most important part of my edu-

cation. Indeed it educated me artistically in all sorts of ways, and disqualified me only in one—that of criticizing Mozart fairly. Everyone appears a sentimental, hysterical bungler in comparison, when anything brings his finest work vividly back to me. *The World*, 9th December 1891, p. 26.

I have a professional reason for not drinking alcohol. The work I have to do depends for its quality on a very keen self-criticism. Anything that makes me easily pleased with myself instantly reduces the quality of my work. Instead of following up and writing down about two per cent of the ideas that occur to me on any subject, I put down ten per cent or even more if I go to work under the comfortable and self-indulgent influence of a narcotic. Character Sketch. *The Review of Reviews*, February 1908, pp. 145, 146.

I have not eaten meat for twenty-seven years. The results are before the pub-

lic. Character Sketch. *The Review of Reviews,* February 1908, p. 145.

Personal Mindedness

. . . a dwarf—a creature with energy enough to make him strong of body and fierce of passion, but with a brutish narrowness of intelligence and selfishness of imagination: too stupid to see that his own welfare can only be compassed as part of the welfare of the world, too full of brute force not to grab vigorously at his own gain. Such dwarfs are quite common in London. *The Perfect Wagnerite,* p. 8.

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The Philosopher

TO make my readers realize what a philosopher is, I can only say that *I* am a philosopher. If you ask incredulously, "How, then, are your articles so interesting?" I reply that there is nothing so interesting as philosophy, provided its materials are not spurious. For instance, take my own materials: humanity and the fine arts. Any studious, timorously ambitious book-worm

can run away from the world with a few shelvesful of history, essays, descriptions, and criticisms, and, having pieced an illusory humanity and art out of the effects produced by his library on his imagination, build some silly systematization of his worthless ideas over the abyss of his own nescience. Such a philosopher is as dull and dry as you please: it is he who brings his profession into disrepute, especially when he talks much about art, and so persuades people to read him. Without having looked at more than fifty pictures in his life, or made up his mind on the smallest point about one of the fifty, he will audaciously take it upon himself to explain the development of painting from Zeuxis and Apelles to Raphael and Michael Angelo. As to the way he will go on about music, of which he always has an awe-stricken conceit, it spoils my temper to think of it, especially when one remembers that musical composition is taught (a monstrous

pretension) in this country by people who *read* scores, and never by any chance listen to performances. Now, the right way to go to work—strange as it may appear—is to look at pictures until you have acquired the power of seeing them. If you look at several thousand good pictures every year, and form some sort of practical judgment about every one of them—were it only that it is not worth troubling over—then at the end of five years or so you will, if you have a wise eye, be able to see what is actually in a picture, and not what you think is in it. Similarly, if you listen critically to music every day for a number of years, you will, if you have a wise ear, acquire the power of hearing music. And so on with all the arts. When we come to humanity it is still the same: only by intercourse with men and women can we learn anything about it. This involves an active life, not a contemplative one; for unless you do something in the world, you can have

no real business to transact with men; and unless you love and are loved, you can have no intimate relations with them. And you must transact business, wirepull politics, discuss religion, give and receive hate, love and friendship with all sorts of people before you can acquire the sense of humanity. If you are to acquire the sense sufficiently to be a philosopher, you must do all these things unconditionally. You must not say that you will be a gentleman and limit your intercourse to this class or that class; or that you will be a virtuous person and generalize about the affections from a single instance—unless, indeed, you have the rare happiness to stumble at first upon an all-enlightening instance. You must have no convictions, because, as Nietzsche puts it, "convictions are prisons." Thus, I blush to add, you cannot be a philosopher and a good man, though you may be a philosopher and a great one. You will say, perhaps, that if this be so, there

should be no philosophers; and perhaps you are right; but though I make you this handsome concession, I do not defer to you to the extent of ceasing to exist. If you insist on the hangman, whose pursuits are far from elevating, you may very well tolerate the philosopher, even if philosophy involves philandering; or, to put it another way, if, in spite of your hangman, you tolerate murder within the sphere of war, it may be necessary to tolerate comparatively venial irregularities within the sphere of philosophy. It is the price of progress ; and, after all, it is the philosopher, and not you, who will burn for it. *The Saturday Review,* 11th April 1896.

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The Philosopher's Brain

DON JUAN. The philosopher is in the grip of the Life Force. This Life Force says to him, " I have done a thousand wonderful things unconsciously by merely willing to live and following the line of least resistance: now I

want to know myself and my destination, and choose my path; so I have made a special brain—a philosopher's brain—to grasp this knowledge for me as the husbandman's hand grasps the plough for me. And this," says the Life Force to the philosopher, "must thou strive to do for me until thou diest, when I will make another brain and another philosopher to carry on the work."

THE DEVIL. What is the use of knowing?

DON JUAN. Why, to be able to choose the line of greatest advantage instead of yielding in the direction of the least resistance. Does a ship sail to its destination no better than a log drifts nowhither? The philosopher is Nature's pilot. And there you have our difference: to be in hell is to drift; to be in heaven is to steer. *Man and Superman,* p. 134.

BUNYAN, Blake, Hogarth and Turner (these four apart and above all the English classics), Goethe, Shelley, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Ibsen, Morris, Tolstoy and Nietzsche are among the writers whose peculiar sense of the world I recognize as more or less akin to my own. Mark the word peculiar. I read Dickens and Shakespear without shame or stint; but their pregnant observations and demonstrations of life are not co-ordinated into any philosophy or religion: on the contrary, Dickens's sentimental assumptions are violently contradicted by his observations; and Shakespear's pessimism is only his wounded humanity. Both have the specific genius of the fictionist and the common sympathies of human feeling and thought in pre-eminent degree . . . but they are concerned with the diversities of the world instead of with its unities. *Man and Superman,* pp. xxviii., xxix.

Life is a thing of which it is important to have a theory; yet most people take it for granted, and go on living for no better reason than that they find themselves alive. Life, Literature and Political Economy. *Clare Market Magazine,* January 1906, p. 27.

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Political Economy

THE players of the great game of economics in future will have to be philosophers dealing with human conduct and destiny in the largest sense, international as well as national. The field of the political economist will be life; and his instrument will be literature. The prophet of the race will be a political economist. Life, Literature and Political Economy. *Clare Market Review,* January 1906, p. 32.

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Poverty

THE thoughtless wickedness with which we scatter sentences of imprisonment, torture in the solitary cell and on the plank bed, and flogging, on

moral invalids and energetic rebels, is as nothing compared to the stupid levity with which we tolerate poverty as if it were either a wholesome tonic for lazy people or else a virtue to be embraced as St. Francis embraced it. If a man is indolent, let him be poor. If he is drunken, let him be poor. If he is not a gentleman, let him be poor. If he is addicted to the fine arts or to pure science instead of to trade and finance, let him be poor. If he chooses to spend his urban eighteen shillings a week or his agricultural thirteen shillings a week on his beer and his family instead of saving it up for his old age, let him be poor. Let nothing be done for "the undeserving": let him be poor. Serve him right! Also—somewhat inconsistently—blessed are the poor! *Major Barbara,* p. 166.

The man who cannot see that starvation, overwork, dirt, and disease are as immoral as prostitution—that they are

the vices and crimes of a nation, and not merely its misfortunes—is (to put it as politely as possible) a hopelessly Private Person. *The Author's Apology.*—*Mrs. Warren's Profession,* p. 54.

. . . The irresistible natural truth which we all abhor and repudiate: to wit, that the greatest of evils and the worst of crimes is poverty, and that our first duty—a duty to which every other consideration should be sacrificed—is not to be poor. "Poor but honest," "the respectable poor," and such phrases are as intolerable and as immoral as "drunken but amiable," "fraudulent but a good after-dinner speaker," "splendidly criminal," or the like. Security, the chief pretence of civilization, cannot exist where the worst of dangers, the danger of poverty, hangs over everybody's head.

Major Barbara, p. 164.

At present we say callously to each citizen: "If you want money, earn it," as

if his having or not having it were a matter that concerned himself alone. We do not even secure for him the opportunity of earning it: on the contrary, we allow our industry to be organized in open dependence on the maintenance of "a reserve army of unemployed" for the sake of "elasticity." The sensible course would be Cobden-Sanderson's: that is, to give every man enough to live well on, so as to guarantee the community against the possibility of a case of the malignant disease of poverty, and then (necessarily) to see that he earned it. *Major Barbara,* p. 167.

UNDERSHAFT. Cleanliness and respectability do not need justification, Barbara: they justify themselves. I see no darkness here, no dreadfulness. In your Salvation shelter I saw poverty, misery, cold and hunger. You gave them bread and treacle and dreams of heaven. I give from thirty shillings a week to twelve thousand a year.

They find their own dreams; but I look after the drainage.

BARBARA. And their souls?

UNDERSHAFT. I save their souls just as I saved yours.

BARBARA [*revolted*] *You* saved my soul! What do you mean?

UNDERSHAFT. I fed you and clothed you and housed you. I took care that you should have money enough to live handsomely—more than enough; so that you could be wasteful, careless, generous. That saved your soul from the seven deadly sins.

BARBARA [*bewildered*] The seven deadly sins!

UNDERSHAFT. Yes, the deadly seven. [*Counting on his fingers*] Food, clothing, firing, rent, taxes, respectability and children. Nothing can lift those seven millstones from Man's neck but money; and the spirit cannot soar until the millstones are lifted. I lifted them from

your spirit. I enabled Barbara to become Major Barbara; and I saved her from the crime of poverty.

CUSINS. Do you call poverty a crime?

UNDERSHAFT. The worst of crimes. All the other crimes are virtues beside it: all the other dishonors are chivalry itself by comparison. Poverty blights whole cities; spreads horrible pestilences; strikes dead the very souls of all who come in sight, sound or smell of it. What you call crime is nothing: a murder here and a theft there, a blow now and a curse then: what do they matter? they are only the accidents and illnesses of life: there are not fifty genuine professional criminals in London. But there are millions of poor people, abject people, dirty people, ill fed, ill clothed people. They poison us morally and physically: they kill the happiness of society: they force us to do away with our own liberties and to organize unnatural cruelties for fear they should rise against us and drag us down into

their abyss. Only fools fear crime: we all fear poverty. Pah! *Major Barbara,* pp. 298, 299.

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Poverty and Wealth

BUT as, thanks to our political imbecility and personal cowardice (fruits of poverty, both), the best imitation of a good life now procurable is life on an independent income, all sensible people aim at securing such an income, and are, of course, careful to legalize and moralize both it and all the actions and sentiments which lead to it and support it as an institution. What else can they do? They know, of course, that they are rich because others are poor. But they cannot help that: it is for the poor to repudiate poverty when they have had enough of it. The thing can be done easily enough: the demonstrations to the contrary made by the economists, jurists, moralists and sentimentalists hired by the rich to defend them, or even doing the

work gratuitously out of sheer folly and abjectness, impose only on the hirers. The reason why the independent income-tax payers are not solid in defence of their position is that the poverty of those we rob prevents our having the good life for which we sacrifice them. Rich men or aristocrats with a developed sense of life—men like Ruskin and William Morris and Kropotkin—have enormous social appetites and very fastidious personal ones. They are not content with handsome houses: they want handsome cities. They are not content with bediamonded wives and blooming daughters: they complain because the charwoman is badly dressed, because the laundress smells of gin, because the sempstress is anemic, because every man they meet is not a friend and every woman not a romance. They turn up their noses at their neighbors' drains, and are made ill by the architecture of their neighbors' houses. Trade patterns made to suit vulgar people do

not please them (and they can get nothing else): they cannot sleep nor sit at ease upon "slaughtered" cabinet-makers' furniture. The very air is not good enough for them: there is too much factory smoke in it. They even demand abstract conditions: justice, honor, a noble moral atmosphere, a mystic nexus to replace the cash nexus. Finally they declare that though Froissart's Knight who "saw that to rob and pill was a good life" may have been right, because he did it with his own hand on horseback and in a steel coat, to rob and pill by the hands of the policeman, the bailiff, and the soldier, and to underpay them meanly for doing it, is not a good life, but rather fatal to all possibility of even a tolerable one. They call on the poor to revolt, and, finding the poor shocked at their ungentlemanliness, despairingly revile the proletariat for its "damned wantlessness" (*verdammte Bedürfnislosigkeit*).

Major Barbara, pp. 168, 169, 170.

I, always on the heroic plane imaginatively, had two disgusting faults which I did not recognize as faults because I could not help them. I was poor and shabby. I therefore tolerated the gross error that poverty, though an inconvenience and a trial, is not a sin and a disgrace; and I stood for my self-respect on the things I had: probity, ability, knowledge of art, laboriousness, and whatever else came cheaply to me. Because I could walk into Hampton Court Palace and the National Gallery (on free days) and enjoy Mantegna and Michael Angelo whilst millionaires were yawning miserably over inept gluttonies; because I could suffer more by hearing a movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony taken at a wrong tempo than a duchess by losing a diamond necklace, I was indifferent to the repulsive fact that if I had fallen in love with the duchess I did not possess a morning suit in which I could reasonably have expected her to touch me with

the furthest protended pair of tongs; and I did not see that to remedy this I should have been prepared to wade through seas of other people's blood. Indeed it is this perception which constitutes an aristocracy nowadays. It is the secret of all our governing classes, which consist finally of people who, though perfectly prepared to be generous, humane, cultured, philanthropic, public spirited and personally charming in the second instance, are unalterably resolved, in the first, to have money enough for a handsome and delicate life, and will, in pursuit of that money, batter in the doors of their fellow-men, sell them up, sweat them in fetid dens, shoot, stab, hang, imprison, sink, burn and destroy them in the name of law and order. And this shews their fundamental sanity and rightmindedness; for a sufficient income is indispensable to the practice of virtue; and the man who will let any unselfish consideration stand between him and its attainment is a weakling, a dupe,

and a predestined slave. If I could convince our impecunious mobs of this, the world would be reformed before the end of the week; for the sluggards who are content to be wealthy without working and the dastards who are content to work without being wealthy, together with all the pseudo-moralists and ethicists and cowardice mongers generally, would be exterminated without shrift, to the unutterable enlargement of life and ennoblement of humanity. We might even make some beginnings of civilization under such happy circumstances. *The Irrational Knot,* pp. xviii., xix.

The instinct which has led the British peerage to fortify itself by American alliances is healthy and well inspired. Thanks to it, we shall still have a few people to maintain the tradition of a handsome, free, proud, costly life, whilst the craven mass of us are keeping up our starveling pretence that it is more

important to be good than to be rich, and piously cheating, robbing, and murdering one another by doing our duty as policemen, soldiers, bailiffs, jurymen, turnkeys, hangmen, tradesmen, and curates, at the command of those who know that the golden grapes are *not* sour. Why, good heavens! we shall all pretend that this straightforward truth of mine is mere Swiftian satire, because it would require a little courage to take it seriously and either act on it or make me drink the hemlock for uttering it. *The Irrational Knot*, pp. xix., xx.

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Prayer

LORD SUMMERHAYS. Do you not pray as common people do?

LINA. Common people do not pray, my lord: they only beg.

LORD SUMMERHAYS. You never ask for anything?

LINA. No.

Misalliance (unpublished, 1912).

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WHEN we succeed in adjusting our social structure in such a way as to enable us to solve social questions as fast as they become really pressing, they will no longer force their way into the theatre. Had Ibsen, for instance, had any reason to believe that the abuses to which he called attention in his prose plays would have been adequately attended to without his interference, he would no doubt have gladly left them alone. The same exigency drove William Morris in England from his tapestries, his epics, and his masterpieces of printing, to try and bring his fellow citizens to their senses by the summary process of shouting at them in the streets and in Trafalgar Square. John Ruskin's writing began with Modern Painters; Carlyle began with literary studies of German culture and the like: both were driven to become revolutionary pamphleteers. If people are rotting and starving in all directions, and nobody else has the heart or brains to make a

disturbance about it, the great writers must. The Problem Play.

The Humanitarian, May 1895.

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Professional Work

THIS is a miserably incompetent world. The average doctor is a walking compound of natural ignorance and acquired witchcraft, who kills your favourite child, wreck's your wife's health, and orders you into habits of nervous dram-drinking before you have the courage to send him about his business, and take your chance like a gentleman. The average lawyer is a nincompoop, who contradicts your perfectly sound impressions on notorious points of law, involves you in litigation when your case is hopeless, compromises when your success is certain, and cannot even make your will without securing the utter defeat of your intention if any one takes the trouble to dispute them. And so on, down to the bootmaker whose boots you have to make your tortured

feet fit, and the tailor who clothes you as if you were a cast-iron hot-water apparatus. You imagine that these people have professions; and you find that what they have is only, in the correct old world, their "mystery"—a humbug, like all mysteries. And yet, how we help to keep up the humbug!
The Saturday Review, 16th May 1896.

What is called professional work is, in point of severity, just what you choose to make it, either commonplace, easy, and requiring only *ex*tensive industry to be lucrative, or else distinguished, difficult, and exacting the fiercest *in*tensive industry in return, after a probation of twenty years or so, for authority, reputation and an income only sufficient for simple habits and plain living. The whole professional world lies between these two extremes.

On Going to Church.
The Savoy, January 1896, p. 16.

Progress

THE more ignorant men are, the more convinced are they that their little parish and their little chapel is an apex to which civilization and philosophy have painfully struggled up the pyramid of time from a desert of savagery. Savagery, they think, became barbarism; barbarism became ancient civilization; ancient civilization became Pauline Christianity; Pauline Christianity became Roman Catholicism; Roman Catholicism became the Dark Ages; and the Dark Ages were finally enlightened by the Protestant instincts of the English race. The whole process is summed up as Progress with a capital P. And any elderly gentleman of Progressive temperament will testify that the improvement since he was a boy is enormous.

Three Plays for Puritans, p. 199.

Steam locomotion is possible without a nation of Stephensons, although national Christianity is impossible without a na-

tion of Christs. But does any man seriously believe that the *chauffeur* who drives a motor car from Paris to Berlin is a more highly evolved man than the charioteer of Achilles, or that a modern Prime Minister is a more enlightened ruler than Cæsar because he rides a tricycle, writes his dispatches by the electric light, and instructs his stockbroker through the telephone.

Man and Superman, p. 217.

The point to seize is that social progress takes effect through the replacement of old institutions by new ones; and since every institution involves the recognition of the duty of conforming to it, progress must involve the repudiation of an established duty at every step. If the Englishman had not repudiated the duty of absolute obedience to his king, his political progress would have been impossible. If women had not repudiated the duty of absolute submission to their husbands, and defied public opinion as

to the limits set by modesty to their education, they would never have gained the protection of the Married Women's Property Act or the power to qualify themselves as medical practitioners. If Luther had not trampled on his duty to the head of his Church and on his vow of chastity, our priests would still have to choose between celibacy and profligacy. There is nothing new, then, in the defiance of duty by the reformer: every step of progress means a duty repudiated, and a scripture torn up.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, pp. 7, 8.

History, as far as we are capable of history (which is not saying much as yet), shews that all changes from crudity of social organization to complexity, and from mechanical agencies in government to living ones, seem anarchic at first sight. No doubt it is natural to a snail to think that any evolution which threatens to do away with shells will result in general death from exposure. Never-

theless, the most elaborately housed beings today are born not only without houses on their backs but without even fur or feathers to clothe them.

The Perfect Wagnerite, p. 77.

Even if man's increased command over Nature included any increased command over himself (the only sort of command relevant to his evolution into a higher being), the fact remains that it is only by running away from the increased command over Nature to country places where Nature is still in primitive command over Man that he can recover from the effects of the smoke, the stench, the foul air, the overcrowding, the racket, the ugliness, the dirt which our civilization costs us. If manufacturing activity means Progress, the town must be more advanced than the country; and the field laborers and village artisans of today must be much less changed from the servants of Job than the proletariat of modern London from the proletariat

of Cæsar's Rome. Yet the cockney proletarian is so inferior to the village laborer that it is only by steady recruiting from the country that London is kept alive. *Three Plays for Puritans,* pp. 201, 202.

Unfortunately, human enlightenment does not progress by nicer and nicer adjustments, but by violent corrective reactions which invariably send us clean over our saddle and would bring us to the ground on the other side if the next reaction did not send us back again with equally excessive zeal. Ecclesiasticism and Constitutionalism send us one way, Protestantism and Anarchism the other; Order rescues us from confusion and lands us in Tyranny; Liberty then saves the situation and is presently found to be as great a nuisance as Despotism. A scientifically balanced application of these forces, theoretically possible, is practically incompatible with human passion.

The Perfect Wagnerite, pp. 68, 69.

THERE is no magic in the ordeal of popular election to change narrow minds into wide ones, cowards into commanders, private ambition into civic patriotism, or crankiness into common sense. But still less is there any tendency to reverse the operation; for the narrowest fool, the vulgarest adventurer, the most impossible fanatic, gets socially educated by public life and committee work to an extent never reached in private life, or even in private commerce. *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading*, p. 5.

Public Life

PUNCH and Judy, the eternal rogue's comedy tempting the business dramatist by its assured popularity, and fascinating the artist dramatist by its unlimited depth, which yet involves no obligation to fully fathom it or else fail. Success is safe at any depth, from an inch downwards. At the street corner, with a deplorable Judy, an infant thrown out of the window, a dog Toby, and a few

Punch and Judy

assorted types of law and order culminating in a hangman and a devil, the great issues of the comedy can be ribaldly touched to the music of pipes and drum. At the other end of the range, Mozart's Don Giovanni, the world's masterpiece in stage art, is only Punch on a higher plane. Every brace of vagabonds can master and perform the one; the greatest artists in the world can, at their best, only bungle through the other. Between the two lies all philosophic comedy, high and low, with its Faustuses, its Robert Macaires, its Affable Hawks, its Jeremy Diddlers, its common Joeys with red-hot poker and sausages, and its Pierrots. *The Saturday Review*, 25th April 1896.

Punishment

A STATE which is too humane to punish will also be too thrifty to waste the life of honest men in watching or restraining dishonest ones. That is why we do not imprison dogs. We even take our chance of their first bite. But if

a dog delights to bark and bite, it goes to the lethal chamber. That seems to me sensible. To allow the dog to expiate his bite by a period of torment, and then let him loose in a much more savage condition (for the chain makes a dog savage) to bite again and expiate again, having meanwhile spent a great deal of human life and happiness in the task of chaining and feeding and tormenting him, seems to me idiotic and superstitious. Yet that is what we do to men who bark and bite and steal. It would be far more sensible to put up with their vices, as we put with their illnesses, until they give more trouble than they are worth, at which point we should, with many apologies and expressions of sympathy, and some generosity in complying with last wishes, place them in the lethal chamber and get rid of them. Under no circumstances should they be allowed to expiate their misdeeds by a manufactured penalty, to subscribe to a charity, or to compensate the victims. If there

is to be no punishment there can be no forgiveness. We shall never have a real moral responsibility until everyone knows that his deeds are irrevocable, and that his life depends on his usefulness. Hitherto, alas! humanity has never dared face these hard facts. We frantically scatter conscience money and invent systems of conscience banking, with expiatory penalties, atonements, redemptions, salvations, hospital subscription lists and what not, to enable us to contract-out of the moral code. Not content with the old scapegoat and sacrificial lamb, we deify human saviors, and pray to miraculous virgin intercessors. We attribute mercy to the inexorable; soothe our consciences after committing murder by throwing ourselves on the bosom of divine love; and shrink even from our own gallows because we are forced to admit that it, at least, is irrevocable—as if one hour of imprisonment were not as irrevocable as any execution! *Major Barbara,* pp. 198, 199.

The Pure Fool

ALL human progress involves, as its first condition, the willingness of the pioneer to make a fool of himself. The sensible man is the man who adapts himself to existing conditions. The fool is the man who persists in trying to adapt the conditions to himself. Both extremes have their disadvantages. Too much sense is apt to end in knavery, and too much folly in martyrdom. I cling to my waning folly as a corrective to my waxing good sense as anxiously as I once nursed my good sense to defend myself against my folly. A young poet always starts with an infinitely wise hero: an old one—Richard Wagner, for example—ends with a "pure fool." Socialism at the International Congress.

Cosmopolis, September 1896, p. 658.

Real Plays

WHEN I was young, the banquets on the stage were made by the property man: his goblets and pasties, and epergnes laden with grapes, regaled guests who walked off and on through

illusory wainscotting simulated by the precarious perspective of the wings. The scene-painter built the rooms; the costumier made the dresses; the armour was made apparently by dipping the legs of the knights in a solution of salt of spangles and precipitating the metal on their calves by some electro-process; the leader of the band made the music; and the author wrote the verse and invented the law, the morals, the religion, the art, the jurisprudence, and whatever else might be needed in the abstract department of the play. Since then we have seen great changes. Real walls, ceilings, and doors are made by real carpenters; real tailors and dressmakers clothe the performers; real armourers harness them; and real musicians write the music and have it performed with full orchestral honors at the Crystal Palace and the Philharmonic. All that remains is to get a real poet to write the verse, a real philosopher to do the morals, a real divine to put in the religion, a real lawyer

to adjust the law, and a real painter to design the pictorial effects. *The Saturday Review*, 19th January 1895.

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Reason

THE reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

Man and Superman, p. 238.

The man who listens to Reason is lost: Reason enslaves all whose minds are not strong enough to master her.

Man and Superman, p. 238.

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Reflections

ROME, that has achieved greatness only to learn how greatness destroys nations of men who are not great!

Cæsar and Cleopatra, p. 178.

What will win in the race for Empire is the courage to look realities in the face and the energy to adapt social organiza-

tion to the needs of the modern conscience, and so substitute a fruitful life for a fool's paradise. In what part of the British Empire these qualities are to be found at present (if in any) I know not: I have certainly not observed them lately in England. Civilization and the Soldier. *The Humane Review*, January 1901, p. 312.

In a few centuries the Ionian sea will still laugh in the southern sun; and on its bosom, gently heaving, the shadows of airships (of Chinese manufacture, run by International Federations as State lines) will flit towards the whitecliffed island where a once famous nation will live by letting lodgings. Civilization and the Soldier. *The Humane Review*, January 1901, p. 314.

CÆSAR. Might not the gods destroy the world if their only thought were to be at peace next year?

Cæsar and Cleopatra, p. 134.

. . . that secret of heroism, never to let your life be shaped by fear of its end. *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 92.

There are no moments in life more tragic than those in which the humble common man, the manual worker, leaving with implicit trust all high affairs to his betters, and reverencing them wholly as worthy of that trust, even to the extent of accepting as his rightful function the saving of them from all roughening and coarsening drudgeries, first discovers that they are corrupt, greedy, unjust and treacherous.

The Perfect Wagnerite, p. 15.

Our deepest convictions are on a plane where sectarian distinctions have no importance, and where matters on which no influential sect has yet dared to utter a sincere opinion are of very great importance indeed.

The Daily News, 25th August 1902.

I have always despised Adam because he had to be tempted by the woman, as she

was by the serpent, before he could be induced to pluck the apple from the tree of knowledge. I should have swallowed every apple on the tree the moment the owner's back was turned.

The Doctor's Dilemma, p. xxxix.

The most pitiful sort of ignorance is ignorance of the few great men who are men of our own time. Most of us die without having heard of those contemporaries of ours for our opportunities of seeing and applauding whom posterity will envy us. Imagine meeting the ghost of an Elizabethan cockney in heaven, and, on asking him eagerly what Shakespear was like, being told either that the cockney had never heard of Shakespear, or knew of him vaguely as an objectionable writer of plays full of regrettable errors of taste.

Three Plays by Brieux, Preface, p. liv.

Without passion no man can be good or bad: he can at most be harmless or mischievous; and in either case he is the

genuine fool of Scripture. *Christian Commonwealth,* 20th July 1910.

The Radicals who used to advocate, as an indispensable preliminary to social reform, the strangling of the last king with the entrails of the last priest, substituted compulsory vaccination for compulsory baptism without a murmur.

The Doctor's Dilemma, p. xv.

Man is the only animal of which I am thoroughly and cravenly afraid. I have never thought much of the courage of a lion-tamer. Inside the cage he is at least safe from other men. There is not much harm in a lion. He has no ideals, no religion, no politics, no chivalry, no gentility: in short, no reason for destroying anything that he does not want to eat. In the Days of my Youth. *M.A.P.,* 17th September 1898, p. 324.

Any place where men dwell, village or city, is a reflection of the consciousness of every single man. On Going to Church.

The Savoy, January 1896, p. 17.

LADY CICELY. Men are always thinking that they are going to do something grandly wicked to their enemies; but when it comes to the point, really bad men are just as rare as really good ones. *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, p. 254.

DOYLE. Live in contact with dreams and you will get something of their charm: live in contact with facts and you will get something of their brutality. I wish I could find a country to live in where the facts were not brutal and the dreams not unreal. *John Bull's Other Island*, p. 28.

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Religion on the Stage

IT is said that "some things" are too sacred to be represented on the stage. The phrase "some things" is highly characteristic: it recalls the intelligent member of Parliament who supported the attempt to exclude the late Charles Bradlaugh from the House of Commons on the ground that "a man ought

to believe in something or another." But since it is just as well not to be frivolously vague in speaking of sacred things, let us replace "some things" by the mysteries of religion, which is what the objectors would mean if, on this subject, they were earnest enough to mean anything at all. Pray what are the mysteries of religion? Are they faith, hope, love, heroism, life, creation; or are they pews and pulpits, prayer-books and Sunday bonnets, copes and stoles and dalmatics? Even that large section of the population of these islands whose religion is the merest idolatry of material symbols will not deny that the former are the realities of religion. Then I ask the gentlemen who think that the pews and prayer-books are too sacred to be represented on the stage, why it is that they have never protested against the fact that all our dramas deal with faith, hope, love, and the rest of the essentials? . . . The objection made to Mr. Jones's play

(Michael and his Lost Angel) is really an objection to Michael's treatment of religion as co-extensive with life: that is, as genuinely catholic. To the man who regards religion as only a water-tight Sunday compartment of social observance, such a view is not only inconvenient but positively terrifying. I am sorry for him; but I can assure him that the British drama is annexing steadily the territory on which he feels so uncomfortable. And whoever tries to obstruct that advance will be inevitably ground into the mud. When I want to exhibit the might of criticism, I may throw an express train off the line; but you do not catch me trying to stop the imperceptibly slow march of a glacier. *The Saturday Review,* 25th January 1896.

Religions and Poverty

NO tolerated Church nor Salvation Army can ever win the entire confidence of the poor. It must be on the side of the police and the military, no

matter what it believes or disbelieves; and as the police and the military are the instruments by which the rich rob and oppress the poor (on legal and moral principles made for the purpose), it is not possible to be on the side of the poor and of the police at the same time. Indeed the religious bodies, as the almoners of the rich, become a sort of auxiliary police, taking off the insurrectionary edge of poverty with coals and blankets, bread and treacle, and soothing and cheering the victims with hopes of immense and inexpensive happiness in another world when the process of working them to premature death in the service of the rich is complete in this.

Major Barbara, pp. 189, 190.

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Remuneration

WHEN I became active in the Socialist movement, and people tried to pose me with the usual objections about inequality of work requiring inequality of pay, and so forth, I had no difficulty in assuring them from my own experi-

ence, and from the clue it had given me to the rest of the world, that, other things being equal, the higher the work the less people would do it for. Bernard Shaw as a Clerk. *The Clerk,* January 1908, p. 8.

At present those who do the hard work are the worst paid, those whose work is easy are better remunerated, whilst those who do nothing receive most. *Pearson's Weekly,* 12th January 1905.

The man who pretends that the distribution of income in this country reflects the distribution of ability or character is an ignoramus. The man who says that it could by any possible political device be made to do so is an unpractical visionary. But the man who says that it ought to do so is something worse than an ignoramus and more disastrous than a visionary: he is, in the profoundest Scriptural sense of the word, a fool. *Socialism and Superior Brains,* p. 9.

NAPOLEON gained the command of the French army because he was the ablest general in France. But suppose every individual in the French army had been a Napoleon also! None the less a commander-in-chief, with his whole hierarchy of subalterns, would have had to be appointed—by lot if you like—and here, again, from the moment the lot was cast, the particular Napoleon who drew the straw for commander-in-chief would have been the great, the all-powerful Napoleon, much more able than the Napoleons who were corporals and privates. After a year, the difference in ability between the men who had been doing nothing but sentry duty, under no strain of responsibility, and the man who had been commanding the army would have been enormous. As "the defenders of the system of Conservatism" well know, we have for centuries made able men out of ordinary ones by allowing them to inherit exceptional power and status; and the success

of the plan in the phase of social development to which it was proper was due to the fact that, provided only the favored man were really an ordinary man, and not a duffer, the extraordinary power conferred on him did effectually create extraordinary ability as compared with that of an agricultural laborer, for example, of equal natural endowments. The gentleman, the lord, the king, all discharging social functions of which the laborer is incapable, are products as artificial as queen bees. Their superiority is produced by giving them a superior status, just as the inferiority of the laborer is produced by giving him an inferior status. But the superior income which is the appanage of superior status is not rent of ability. It is a payment made to a man to exercise normal ability in an abnormal situation. Rent of ability is what a man gets by exercising abnormal ability in a normal situation. *Socialism and Superior Brains,* pp. 36, 37, 38.

Reparation

FORGIVENESS, absolution, atonement, are figments: punishment is only a pretence of cancelling one crime by another; and you can no more have forgiveness without vindictiveness than you can have a cure without a disease. You will never get a high morality from people who conceive that their misdeeds are revocable and pardonable, or in a society where absolution and expiation are officially provided for us all.

Major Barbara, p. 182.

Reputations

I HATE to think that Shakespear has lasted 300 years, though he got no further than Koheleth the Preacher, who died many centuries before him; or that Plato, more than 2,000 years old, is still ahead of our voters. We must hurry on: we must get rid of reputations: they are weeds in the soil of ignorance. Cultivate that soil, and they will flower more beautifully, but only as annuals. *Three Plays for Puritans,* p. xxxvii.

Resentment

POTHINUS [*astonished*] Then you do not resent treachery?

CÆSAR. Resent! O thou foolish Egyptian, what have I to do with resentment? Do I resent the wind when it chills me, or the night when it makes me stumble in the darkness? Shall I resent youth when it turns from age, and ambition when it turns from servitude? *Cæsar and Cleopatra,* p. 174.

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Retaliation

CÆSAR. Do you hear? These knockers at your gates are also believers in vengeance and in stabbing. You have slain their leader: it is right that they shall slay you. If you doubt it, ask your four counsellors here. And then in the name of that right [*he emphasizes the word with great scorn*] shall I not slay them for murdering their Queen, and be slain in my turn by their countrymen as the invader of their fatherland? Can Rome do less than slay these slayers, too, to shew the world how Rome avenges her sons and her

honor. And so, to the end of history, murder shall breed murder, always in the name of right and honor and peace, until the gods are tired of blood and create a race that can understand.

Cæsar and Cleopatra, p. 184.

It is exceedingly difficult to make people realize that an evil is an evil. For instance, we seize a man and deliberately do him a malicious injury: say, imprison him for years. One would not suppose that it needed any exceptional clearness of wit to recognize in this an act of diabolical cruelty. But in England such a recognition provokes a stare of surprise, followed by an explanation that the outrage is punishment or justice or something else that is all right, or perhaps by a heated attempt to argue that we should all be robbed and murdered in our beds if such senseless villainies as sentences of imprisonment were not committed daily. It is useless to argue that even if this were true, which it is

not, the alternative to adding crimes of our own to the crimes from which we suffer is not helpless submission. Chickenpox is an evil; but if I were to declare that we must either submit to it or else repress it sternly by seizing everyone who suffers from it and punishing them by inoculation with smallpox, I should be laughed at; for though nobody could deny that the result would be to prevent chickenpox to some extent by making people avoid it much more carefully, and to effect a further apparent prevention by making them conceal it very anxiously, yet people would have sense enough to see that the deliberate propagation of smallpox was a creation of evil, and must therefore be ruled out in favor of purely humane and hygienic measures. Yet in the precisely parallel case of a man breaking into my house and stealing my wife's diamonds I am expected as a matter of course to steal ten years of his life, torturing him all the time. If he tries to

defeat that monstrous retaliation by shooting me, my survivors hang him.

Major Barbara, pp. 164, 165.

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Reverence

TO ask me to be reverent with whatever moving appeals to good taste, is like asking me to hang from a tree by my tail. In me nature has discarded the tail, having higher uses for me than hanging on trees upside down. She has also discarded the bump of veneration, having nobler attitudes for me than kneeling and grovelling. I have achieved at least one of the characteristics of the Superman: the upright posture of the soul; and I am as proud of it as the first monkey who achieved the upright posture of the body, and so felt himself a stage nearer the Supermonkey, man.

Unpublished.

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Revolution

A REVOLUTIONIST is one who desires to discard the existing social order and try another.

The constitution of England is revolu-

tionary. To a Russian or Anglo-Indian bureaucrat, a general election is as much a revolution as a referendum or plebiscite in which the people fight instead of voting. The French Revolution overthrew one set of rulers and substituted another with different interests and different views. That is what a general election enables the people to do in England every seven years if they choose. Revolution is therefore a national institution in England; and its advocacy by an Englishman needs no apology.

Every man is a revolutionist concerning the thing he understands. For example, every person who has mastered a profession is a sceptic concerning it, and consequently a revolutionist.

Every genuinely religious person is a heretic and therefore a revolutionist.

All who achieve real distinction in life begin as revolutionists. The most distinguished persons become more revolutionary as they grow older, though they

are commonly supposed to become more conservative owing to their loss of faith in conventional methods of reform.
Any person under the age of thirty, who, having any knowledge of the existing social order, is not a revolutionist, is an inferior.

And Yet

Revolutions have never lightened the burden of tyranny: they have only shifted it to another shoulder.

Man and Superman, pp. 179, 180.

Here am I, for instance, by class a respectable man, by common sense a hater of waste and disorder, by intellectual constitution legally minded to the verge of pedantry, and by temperament apprehensive and economically disposed to the limit of old maidishness; yet I am, and have always been, and shall now always be, a revolutionary writer, because our laws make law impossible; our liberties destroy all freedom; our property is organized robbery; our morality is

an impudent hypocrisy; our wisdom is administered by inexperienced or malexperienced dupes, our power wielded by cowards and weaklings, and our honor false in all its points. I am an enemy of the existing order for good reasons; but that does not make my attacks any less encouraging or helpful to people who are its enemies for bad reasons. The existing order may shriek that if I tell the truth about it, some foolish person may drive it to become still worse by trying to assassinate it. I cannot help that, even if I could see what worse it could do than it is already doing.

Major Barbara, p. 197.

It has been said that the French Revolution was the work of Voltaire, Rousseau and the Encyclopedists. It seems to me to have been the work of men who had observed that virtuous indignation, caustic criticism, conclusive argument and instructive pamphleteering, even when done by the most earnest

and witty literary geniuses, were as useless as praying, things going steadily from bad to worse whilst the Social Contract and the pamphlets of Voltaire were at the height of their vogue. Eventually, as we know, perfectly respectable citizens and earnest philanthropists connived at the September massacres because hard experience had convinced them that if they contented themselves with appeals to humanity and patriotism, the aristocracy, though it would read their appeals with the greatest enjoyment and appreciation, flattering and admiring the writers, would none the less continue to conspire with foreign monarchists to undo the revolution and restore the old system with every circumstance of savage vengeance and ruthless repression of popular liberties. *Major Barbara,* pp. 177, 178.

The most pig-headed Englishman has a much stronger objection to be crushed

or killed by institutions and conventions, however sacred or even respectable, than a Russian peasant or a Chinaman. If he commits a sin, he either tells a lie and sticks to it, or else demands "a broadening of thought" which will bring his sin within the limits of the allowable. To expiation, if it can possibly be avoided, he has a wholesome and energetic objection. He is an individualist, not a fatalist: with all his apparent conventionality there is no getting over the fact that institutions—moral, political, artistic, and ecclesiastical—which in more Eastern lands have paralysed whole races, making each century a mere stereotype of the one before, are mere footballs for the centuries in England. It is an instinct with me personally to attack every idea which has been full grown for ten years, especially if it claims to be the foundation of all human society. I am prepared to back human society against any idea, positive or negative, that can be brought

into the field against it. In this—except as to my definite intellectual consciousness of it—I am, I believe, a much more typical and popular person in England than the conventional man; and I believe that when we begin to produce a genuine national drama, this apparently anarchic force, the mother of higher law and humaner order, will underlie it, and that the public will lose all patience with the conventional collapses which serve for last acts to the serious dramas of to-day. Depend upon it, the miserable doctrine that life is a mess, and that there is no way out of it, will never nerve any man to write a truly heroic play west of the Caucasus. *The Saturday Review,* 18th January 1896.

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Right and Wrong

THE persons of my plays are all right from their several points of view; and their points of view are, for the dramatic moment, mine also. This may puzzle the people who believe that

there is such a thing as an absolutely right point of view, usually their own. It may seem to them that nobody who doubts this can be in a state of grace. However that may be, it is certainly true that nobody who agrees with them can possibly be a dramatist, or indeed anything else that turns upon a knowledge of mankind. Hence it has been pointed out that Shakespear had no conscience. Neither have I, in that sense. *Man and Superman,* p. xxvi.

STEPHEN. I know the difference between right and wrong.

UNDERSHAFT [*hugely tickled*] You dont say so! What! no capacity for business, no knowledge of law, no sympathy with art, no pretension to philosophy; only a simple knowledge of the secret that has puzzled all the philosophers, baffled all the lawyers, muddled all the men of business, and ruined most of the artists: the secret of right and wrong. Why, man, youre a genius, a

master of masters, a god! At twenty-four, too!

STEPHEN [*keeping his temper with difficulty*] You are pleased to be facetious. I pretend to nothing more than any honorable English gentleman claims as his birthright.

UNDERSHAFT. Oh, thats everybody's birthright. Look at poor little Jenny Hill, the Salvation lassie! she would think you were laughing at her if you asked her to stand up in the street and teach grammar or geography or mathematics or even drawing-room dancing; but it never occurs to her to doubt that she can teach morals and religion. You are all alike, you respectable people. You cant tell me the bursting strain of a ten-inch gun, which is a very simple matter; but you all think you can tell me the bursting strain of a man under temptation. You darent handle high explosives; but youre all ready to handle honesty and truth and justice and the whole duty of man, and kill

one another at that game. What a country! what a world! *Major Barbara*, pp. 278, 279.

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The Right to Live

THE right to live is a Natural Right: that is to say it must be dogmatically postulated before any political constitution is possible. All argument on the matter leads irresistibly to Nirvana—to universal suicide; and this must be rejected as a *reductio ad absurdum*, and a purely dogmatic Will to Live accepted as the basis from which all social order must start.

Correspondence.

I should make each citizen appear before a Board once in seven years and defend his claim to live. If he could not, then he should be put into a lethal chamber. He could, of course, be represented by counsel, and Death would be represented by an Attorney General.

Correspondence.

ROMANCE is always, I think, a product of *ennui,* an attempt to escape from a condition in which real life appears empty, prosaic and boresome —therefore essentially a gentlemanly product. The man who has grappled with real life, flesh to flesh and spirit to spirit, has little patience with fools' paradises. When Carlyle said to the emigrants, "Here and now is your America," he spoke as a realist to romanticists; and Ibsen was of the same mind when he finally decided that there is more tragedy in the next suburban villa than in a whole imaginary Italy of unauthentic Borgias. Indeed, in our present phase, romance has become the literary trade of imaginative weaklings who have neither the energy to gain experience of life nor the genius to divine it. *The Saturday Review,* 26th June 1897. Romance

When mankind gets a serious fit, and the desire for a true knowledge of the

world and a noble life in it at all costs arises in men and lifts them above lusting for the trivial luxuries and ideals and happy endings of romance, romance, repudiated by art and challenged by religion, falls back on its citadel, and announces that it has given up all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and recognizes that nothing is eternally valid and all-redeeming but Love. That is to say, the romanticist is blind enough to imagine that the humanist will accept the abandonment of all his minor lies as a bribe for the toleration of the most impudent of all lies. "I am willing to be redeemed, and even religious," says the converted romanticist, "if only the business be managed by a pretty woman who will be left in my arms when the curtain falls." *The Saturday Review,* 23rd October 1897.

For all that, the land of dreams is a wonderful place; and the great Roman-

cers who found the key of its gates were no Alnaschars. These artists, inspired neither by faith and beatitude, nor by strife and realization, were neither saints nor crusaders, but pure enchanters, who conjured up a region where existence touches you delicately to the very heart, and where mysteriously thrilling people, secretly known to you in dreams of your childhood, enact a life in which terrors are as fascinating as delights; so that ghosts and death, agony and sin, become, like love and victory, phrases of an unaccountable ecstasy. Goethe bathed by moonlight in the Rhine to learn this white magic, and saturated even the criticism and didacticism of Faust with the strangest charm by means of it. Mozart was a most wonderful enchanter of this kind: he drove very clever men—Oublicheff, for example—clean out of their wits by his airs from heaven and blasts from hell in Le Nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni. From the middle of the eigh-

teenth to the middle of the nineteenth century Art went crazy in its search for spells and dreams; and many artists who, being neither Mozarts nor Goethes, had their minds burnt up instead of cleansed by "the sacred fire," yet could make that fire cast shadows that gave unreal figures a strange majesty, and phantom landscapes a "light that never was on sea or land." These phrases which I quote were then the commonplaces of critics' rhapsodies. Today, alas!—I mean thank goodness!—all this rhapsodizing makes people stare at me as at Rip Van Winkle. The lithographs of Delacroix, the ghostly tam-tam march in Robert the Devil, the tinkle of the goat's bell in Dinorah, the illustrations of Gustave Doré, mean nothing to the elect of this stern generation but an unintelligible refuse of bad drawing; barren, ugly orchestral tinkering; senseless and debased ambition. We have been led forth from the desert in which these

mirages were always on the horizon to a land overflowing with reality and earnestness. But if I were to be stoned for it this afternoon by fervent Wagnerites and Ibsenites, I must declare that the mirages were once dear and beautiful, and that the whole Wagnerian criticism of them, however salutary (I have been myself one of its most ruthless practitioners), has all along been a pious dialectical fraud, because it applies the tests of realism and revelation to the arts of illusion and transfiguration. From the point of view of the Building Act the palaces built by Mr. Brock, the pyrotechnist, may be most pestilent frauds; but that only shews that Mr. Brock's point of view is not that of the Building Act, though it might be very necessary to deliberately force that criticism on his works if real architecture shewed signs of being seduced by the charms of his coloured fires. It was just such an emergency that compelled Wagner to resort to the

pious dialectical fraud against his old romanticist loves. Their enchantments were such that their phantasms, which genius alone could sublimate from real life, became the models after which the journeyman artist worked and was taught to work, blinding him to nature and reality, from which alone his talent could gain nourishment and originality, and setting him to waste his life in outlining the shadows of shadows, with the result that Romanticism became, at second hand, the blight and dry rot of Art. Then all the earnest spirits, from Ruskin and the pre-Raphaelites to Wagner and Ibsen, rose up and made war on it. Salvator Rosa, the romantic painter, went down before the preaching of Ruskin as Delacroix has gone down before the practice of John Maris, Von Uhde, and the impressionists and realists whose work led up to them. Meyerbeer was brutally squelched, and Berlioz put out of countenance, by the preaching and practice

of Wagner. And after Ibsen—nay, even after the cup-and-saucer realists—we no longer care for Schiller; Victor Hugo, on his spurious, violently romantic side, only incommodes us; and the spirit of such a wayward masterpiece of Romanticism as Alfred de Musset's Lorenzaccio would miss fire with us altogether if we could bring ourselves to wade through the morass of pseudo-medieval Florentine chatter with which it begins. *Saturday Review*, 26th June 1897.

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The Romances of Science

WHAT is called Science has always pursued the Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone, and is just as busy after them to-day as ever it was in the days of Paracelsus. We call them by different names: Immunization or Radiology or what not; but the dreams which lure us into the adventures from which we learn are always at bottom the same. *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. xc.

Routine Morality

IT is a cherished tradition in English politics that at a meeting of Lord Melbourne's Cabinet in the early days of Queen Victoria, the Prime Minister, when the meeting threatened to break up in confusion, put his back to the door and said, in the cynically profane manner then fashionable: "Gentlemen: we can tell the House the truth or we can tell it a lie; I do not care a damn which. All I insist on is that we shall all tell the same lie; and you shall not leave the room until you have settled what it is to be." Just so does the bourgeois perceive that the essential thing is not whether a convention is right or wrong, but that everybody shall know what it is and observe it. His cry is always: "I want to know where I stand." Tell him what he may do and what he may not do; and make him feel that he may depend on other people doing or not doing the same; and he feels secure, knowing where he stands and where other people stand. His dread and hatred of

revolutions and heresies and men with original ideas is his dread of disorientation and insecurity. *Three Plays by Brieux,* Preface, p. xxxv.

Let cruelty or kindness or anything else once become customary and it will be practised by people to whom it is not at all natural, but whose rule of life is simply to do only what everybody else does, and who would lose their employment and starve if they indulged in any peculiarity. A respectable man will lie daily, in speech and in print, about the qualities of the article he lives by selling, because it is customary to do so. He will flog his boy for telling a lie, because it is customary to do so. He will also flog him for not telling a lie if the boy tells inconvenient or disrespectful truths, because it is customary to do so. He will give the same boy a present on his birthday, and buy him a spade and bucket at the seaside, because it is customary to do so, being all the time

neither particularly mendacious, nor particularly cruel, nor particularly generous, but simply incapable of ethical judgment or independent action.

The Doctor's Dilemma, pp. l., li.

Those who have felt earthquakes assure us that there is no terror like the terror of the earth swaying under the feet that have always depended on it as the one immovable thing in the world. That is just how the ordinary respectable man feels when some man of genius rocks the moral ground beneath him by denying the validity of a convention.

Three Plays by Brieux, Preface, p. xxxv.

Nothing that is admittedly and unmistakably horrible matters very much, because it frightens people into seeking a remedy: the serious horrors are those which seem entirely respectable and normal to respectable and normal men.

Three Plays by Brieux, Preface, pp. xiv., xv.

THE real secret of the terror inspired by an original thinker is that in repudiating convention he is repudiating that on which his neighbors are relying for their sense of security. But he is usually also doing something even more unpopular. He is proposing new obligations to add to the already heavy burden of duty. When the boy Shelley entertained his college friends by elaborately and solemnly cursing his father, he only shocked us. But when the man Shelley told us that we should feed, clothe, and educate all the children in the country as carefully as if they were our immediate own, we lost our tempers with him, and deprived him of the custody of his own children. *Three Plays by Brieux,* Preface, p. xxxiv.

Routine Morality and the Superman

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IN short, saving and investment are quite secondary duties: the first and the hardest is expenditure on present needs. Saving, investment, life assurance, all of them most prudent and ex-

Saving

cellent operations for people who have had as much of present nourishment as they need, and still have something to spare, are, for heads of families in a state of privation, slow forms of suicide and murder; and those who preach them indiscriminately should be indicted for incitement to crime. When a bishop offends in this way, people who really understand the situation feel their blood rising almost to guillotining point. *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading*, p. 97.

Any fool can save money: it takes a wise man to spend it. *Unpublished.*

The Secret of the Governing Caste

DON JUAN [*to the Devil*] My friend, beauty, purity, respectability, religion, morality, art, patriotism, bravery and the rest are nothing but words which I or anyone else can turn inside out like a glove. They are mere words, useful for duping barbarians into adopting civilization, or the civil-

ized poor into submitting to be robbed and enslaved. That is the family secret of the governing caste; and if we who are of that caste aimed at more Life for the world instead of at more power and luxury for our miserable selves, that secret would make us great. *Man and Superman,* p. 131.

Self-Control

I HAVE not failed to observe that all the drugs, from tea to morphia, and all the drams, from lager beer to brandy, dull the edge of self-criticism and make a man content with something less than the best work of which he is soberly capable. He thinks his work better, when he is really only more easily satisfied with himself. On Going to Church. *The Savoy,* January 1898, p. 14.

The part played in evolution by the voluptuary will be the same as that already played by the glutton. The glutton, as the man with the strongest motive for nourishing himself, will always

take more pains than his fellows to get food. When food is so difficult to get that only great exertions can secure a sufficient supply of it, the glutton's appetite develops his cunning and enterprise to the utmost; and he becomes not only the best fed but the ablest man in the community. But in more hospitable climates, or where the social organization of the food supply makes it easy for a man to overeat, then the glutton eats himself out of health and finally out of existence. All other voluptuaries prosper and perish in the same way; and this is why the survival of the fittest means finally the survival of the self-controlled, because they alone can adapt themselves to the perpetual shifting of conditions produced by industrial progress. *Man and Superman,* p. 195.

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Self-Sacrifice

NO one ever feels helpless by the side of the self-helper; whilst the self-sacrificer is always a drag, a responsibility, a reproach, an everlasting

and unnatural trouble with whom no really strong soul can live. Only those who have helped themselves know how to help others, and to respect their right to help themselves. Although romantic idealists generally insist on self-surrender as an indispensable element in true womanly love, its repulsive effect is well known and feared in practice by both sexes. The extreme instance is the reckless self-abandonment seen in the infatuation of passionate sexual desire. Every one who becomes the object of that infatuation shrinks from it instinctively. Love loses its charm when it is not free; and whether the compulsion is that of custom and law, or of infatuation, the effect is the same: it becomes valueless. The desire to give inspires no affection unless there is also the power to withhold; and the successful wooer, in both sexes alike, is the one who can stand out for honorable conditions, and, failing them, go without.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, pp. 35, 36.

BUT I am bound to add that I pity the man who cannot enjoy Shakespear. He has outlasted thousands of abler thinkers, and will outlast a thousand more. His gift of telling a story (provided some one else told it to him first); his enormous power over language, as conspicuous in his senseless and silly abuse of it as in his miracles of expression; his humor; his sense of idiosyncratic character; and his prodigious fund of that vital energy which is, it seems, the true differentiating property behind the faculties, good, bad or indifferent, of the man of genius, enable him to entertain us so effectively that the imaginary scenes and people he has created become more real to us than our actual life—at least, until our knowledge and grip of actual life begins to deepen and glow beyond the common. When I was twenty I knew everybody in Shakespear, from Hamlet to Abhorson, much more intimately than I knew my living contemporaries; and

to this day, if the name of Pistol or Polonius catches my eye in a newspaper, I turn to the passage with more curiosity than if the name were that of—but perhaps I had better not mention any one in particular. *The Saturday Review*, 26th September 1896.

Shakespear's power lies in his enormous command of word-music, which gives fascination to his most blackguardly repartees and sublimity to his hollowest platitudes, besides raising to the highest force all his gifts as an observer, an imitator of personal mannerisms and characteristics, a humorist and a story-teller. Shakespear's weakness lies in his complete deficiency in that highest sphere of thought, in which poetry embraces religion, philosophy, morality, and the bearing of these on communities, which is sociology. His characters have no religion, no politics, no conscience, no hope, no convictions of any sort. There are, as Ruskin pointed out, no heroes

in Shakespear. His test of the worth of life is the vulgar hedonic test, and since life cannot be justified by this or any other external test, Shakespear comes out of his reflective period a vulgar pessimist, oppressed with a logical demonstration that life is not worth living, and only surpassing Thackeray in respect of being fertile enough, instead of repeating "Vanitas vanitatum" at second-hand, to word the futile doctrine differently and better in such passages as "Out, out, brief candle." This does not mean that Shakespear lacked the enormous fund of joyousness which is the secret of genius, but simply that, like most middle-class Englishmen bred in private houses, he was a very incompetent thinker, and took it for granted that all inquiry into life began and ended with the question "Does it pay?" Which, as I could have told him, and as Mr. Gilbert Chesterton could have told him, is not the point. *The Daily News*, 27th April 1905.

WHAT a pity it is that people who love the sound of Shakespear so seldom go on the stage! The ear is the sure clue to him: only a musician can understand the play of feeling which is the real rarity in his early plays. In a deaf nation these plays would have died long ago. The moral attitude in them is conventional and second-hand: the borrowed ideas, however finely expressed, have not the overpowering human interest of those original criticisms of life which supply the rhetorical element in his later works. Even the individualization which produces that old-established British specialty, the Shakespearean "delineation of character," owes all its magic to the turn of the line, which lets you into the secret of its utterer's mood and temperament, not by its commonplace meaning, but by some subtle exaltation, or stultification, or slyness, or delicacy, or hesitancy, or what not in the sound of it. In short, it is the score and not the libretto that

Shakespear's Music

keeps the work alive and fresh; and this is why only musical critics should be allowed to meddle with Shakespear—especially early Shakespear. *The Saturday Review*, 2nd February 1895.

Why is it that Da Ponte's "dramma giocosa," entitled Don Giovanni, a loathsome story of a coarse, witless, worthless libertine, who kills an old man in a duel and is finally dragged down through a trapdoor to hell by his twaddling ghost, is still, after more than a century, as "immortal" as Much Ado? Simply because Mozart clothed it with wonderful music, which turned the worthless words and thoughts of Da Ponte into a magical human drama of moods and transitions of feeling. That is what happened in a smaller way with Much Ado. Shakespear shews himself in it a commonplace librettist working on a stolen plot, but a great musician. No matter how poor, coarse, cheap and obvious the thought may be, the mood

is charming, and the music of the words expresses the mood. Paraphrase the encounters of Benedick and Beatrice in the style of a blue book, carefully preserving every idea they present, and it will become apparent to the most infatuated Shakespearean that they contain at best nothing out of the common in thought or wit, and at worst a good deal of vulgar naughtiness. Paraphrase Goethe, Wagner or Ibsen in the same way, and you will find original observation, subtle thought, wide comprehension, far-reaching intuition, and serious psychological study in them. Give Shakespear a fairer chance in the comparison by paraphrasing even his best and maturest work, and you will still get nothing more than the platitudes of proverbial philosophy, with a very occasional curiosity in the shape of a rudiment of some modern idea, not followed up. Not until the Shakespearean music is added by replacing the paraphrase with the original lines does the enchantment begin. Then you are in

another world at once. When a flower-girl tells a coster to hold his jaw, for nobody is listening to him, and he retorts, "Oh, youre there, are you, you beauty?" they reproduce the wit of Beatrice and Benedick exactly. But put it this way. "I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you." "What! my dear Lady Disdain, are you yet living?" You are miles away from costerland at once. When I tell you that Benedick and the coster are equally poor in thought, Beatrice and the flower-girl equally vulgar in repartee, you reply that I might as well tell you that a nightingale's love is no higher than a cat's. Which is exactly what I do tell you, though the nightingale is the better musician. You will admit, perhaps, that the love of the worst human singer in the world is accompanied by a higher degree of intellectual consciousness than that of the most ravishingly melodious nightingale. Well, in just the same way, there are

plenty of quite second-rate writers who are abler thinkers and wits than William, though they are unable to weave his magic into the expression of their thoughts.

It is not easy to knock this into the public head, because comparatively few of Shakespear's admirers are at all conscious that they are listening to music as they hear his phrases turn and his lines fall so fascinatingly and memorably; whilst we all, no matter how stupid we are, can understand his jokes and platitudes, and are flattered when we are told of the subtlety of the wit we have relished, and the profundity of the thought we have fathomed. Englishmen are specially susceptible to this sort of flattery, because intellectual subtlety is not their strong point. In dealing with them you must make them believe that you are appealing to their brains when you are really appealing to their senses and feelings. With Frenchmen the case is reversed: you must make them believe that

you are appealing to their senses and feelings when you are really appealing to their brains. The Englishman, slave to every sentimental ideal and dupe of every sensuous art, will have it that his great national poet is a thinker. The Frenchman, enslaved and duped only by systems and calculations, insists on his hero being a sentimentalist and artist. That is why Shakespear is esteemed a master-mind in England, and wondered at as a clumsy barbarian in France. *The Saturday Review*, 26th February 1898.

HAMLET

Shakespear's Plays

MR. FORBES ROBERTSON is essentially a classical actor. What I mean by classical is that he can present a dramatic hero as a man whose passions are those which have produced the philosophy, the poetry, the art, and the statecraft of the world, and not merely those which have produced its weddings, coroner's inquests, and executions. And

that is just the sort of actor that Hamlet requires. A Hamlet who only understands his love for Ophelia, his grief for his father, his vindictive hatred of his uncle, his fear of ghosts, his impulse to snub Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and the sportsman's excitement with which he lays the "mouse-trap" for Claudius, can, with sufficient force or virtuosity of execution, get a great reputation in the part, even though the very intensity of his obsession by these sentiments (which are common not only to all men but to many animals), shews that the characteristic side of Hamlet, the side that differentiates him from Fortinbras, is absolutely outside the actor's consciousness. Such a reputation is the actor's, not Hamlet's. Hamlet is not a man in whom "common humanity" is raised by great vital energy to a heroic pitch, like Coriolanus or Othello. On the contrary, he is a man in whom the common personal passions are so superseded by wider and rarer interests,

and so discouraged by a degree of critical self-consciousness which makes the practical efficiency of the instinctive man on the lower plane impossible to him, that he finds the duties dictated by conventional revenge and ambition as disagreeable a burden as commerce is to a poet. Even his instinctive sexual impulses offend his intellect; so that when he meets the woman who excites them he invites her to join him in a bitter and scornful criticism of their joint absurdity, demanding "What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? Why would'st thou be a breeder of sinners?" and so forth, all of which is so completely beyond the poor girl that she naturally thinks him mad. And, indeed, there is a sense in which Hamlet is insane; for he trips over the mistake which lies on the threshold of intellectual self-consciousness: that of bringing life to utilitarian or Hedonistic tests, thus treating it as a means instead of an end. Because Polonius is "a foolish

prating knave," because Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are snobs, he kills them as remorselessly as he might kill a flea, shewing that he has no real belief in the superstitious reason which he gives for not killing himself, and in fact anticipating exactly the whole course of the intellectual history of Western Europe until Schopenhauer found the clue that Shakespear missed. But to call Hamlet mad because he did not anticipate Schopenhauer is like calling Marcellus mad because he did not refer the Ghost to the Psychical Society. It is in fact not possible for any actor to represent Hamlet as mad. He may (and generally does) combine some notion of his own of a man who is the creature of affectionate sentiment with the figure drawn by the lines of Shakespear; but the result is not a madman, but simply one of those monsters produced by the imaginary combinations of two normal species, such as sphinxes, mermaids, or centaurs. And this is the invariable resource of the in-

stinctive, imaginative, romantic actor
You will see him weeping bucketsful o
tears over Ophelia, and treating th
players, the grave-digger, Horatio
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as if they
were mutes at his own funeral. But go
and watch Mr. Forbes Robertson's
Hamlet seizing delightedly on every op
portunity for a bit of philosophic dis
cussion or artistic recreation to escape
from the " cursed spite " of revenge and
love and other common troubles; see
how he brightens up when the players
come; how he tries to talk philosophy
with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern the
moment they come into the room; how
he stops on his country walk with Hora
tio to lean over the churchyard wall and
draw out the gravedigger whom he sees
singing at his trade; how even his fits
of excitement find expression in declaim
ing scraps of poetry; how the shock
of Ophelia's death relieves itself in
the fiercest intellectual contempt for
Laertes's ranting, whilst an hour after-

wards, when Laertes stabs him, he bears no malice for that at all, but embraces him gallantly and comradely; and how he dies as we forgive everything to Charles II. for dying, and makes "the rest is silence" a touchingly humorous apology for not being able to finish his business. See all that; and you have seen a true classical Hamlet. Nothing half so charming has been seen by this generation. It will bear seeing again and again. *The Saturday Review,* 2nd October 1897.

JULIUS CÆSAR

It is when we turn to Julius Cæsar, the most splendidly written political melodrama we possess, that we realize the apparently immortal author of Hamlet as a man, not for all time, but for an age only, and that, too, in all solidly wise and heroic aspects, the most despicable of all the ages in our history. It is impossible for even the most judicially-minded critic to look without a revulsion of indignant contempt at this travestying

of a great man as a silly braggart, whilst the pitiful gang of mischief-makers who destroyed him are lauded as statesmen and patriots. There is not a single sentence uttered by Shakespear's Julius Cæsar that is, I will not say worthy of him, but even worthy of an average Tammany boss. Brutus is nothing but a familiar type of English suburban preacher: politically he would hardly impress the Thames Conservancy Board. Cassius is a vehemently assertive nonentity. It is only when we come to Antony, unctuous voluptuary and self-seeking sentimental demagogue, that we find Shakespear in his depth; and in his depth, of course, he is superlative. Regarded as a crafty stage job, the play is a triumph: rhetoric, claptrap, effective gushes of emotion, all the devices of the popular playwright, are employed with a profusion of power that almost breaks their backs. No doubt there are slips and slovenlinesses of the kind that careful revisers eliminate; but they

count for so little in the mass of accomplishment that it is safe to say that the dramatist's art can be carried no further on that plane. If Goethe, who understood Cæsar and the significance of his death—"the most senseless of deeds" he called it—had treated the subject, his conception of it would have been as superior to Shakespear's as St. John's Gospel is to the Police News; but his treatment could not have been more magnificently successful. As far as sonority, imagery, wit, humor, energy of imagination, power over language, and a whimsically keen eye for idiosyncrasies can make a dramatist, Shakespear was the king of dramatists. Unfortunately, a man may have them all, and yet conceive high affairs of state exactly as Simon Tappertit did. In one of the scenes in Julius Cæsar a conceited poet bursts into the tent of Brutus and Cassius, and exhorts them not to quarrel with one another. If Shakespear had been able to present his play to the ghost of the great

Julius, he would probably have had much the same reception. He certainly would have deserved it. *The Saturday Review,* 29th January 1898.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

The Taming of the Shrew is a remarkable example of Shakespear's repeated attempts to make the public accept realistic comedy. Petruchio is worth fifty Orlandos as a human study. The preliminary scenes in which he shews his character by pricking up his ears at the news that there is a fortune to be got by any man who will take an ugly and ill-tempered woman off her father's hands, and hurrying off to strike the bargain before somebody else picks it up, are not romantic; but they give an honest and masterly picture of a real man, whose like we have all met. The actual taming of the woman by the methods used in taming wild beasts belongs to his determination to make himself rich and comfortable, and his perfect freedom

from all delicacy in using his strength and opportunities for that purpose. The process is quite bearable, because the selfishness of the man is healthily goodhumored and untainted by wanton cruelty; and it is good for the shrew to encounter a force like that and be brought to her senses. Unfortunately, Shakespear's own immaturity, as well as the immaturity of the art he was experimenting in, made it impossible for him to keep the play on the realistic plane to the end; and the last scene is altogether disgusting to modern sensibility. No man with any decency of feeling can sit it out in the company of a woman without being extremely ashamed of the lord-of-creation moral implied in the wager and the speech put into the woman's own mouth. Therefore the play, though still worthy of a complete and efficient representation, would need, even at that, some apology. *The Saturday Review,* 6th November 1897.

NOW that we are nearly done with the nineteenth century, it can hurt no one's feelings to remark that it has been one in which the leading faculty has been the business faculty, and the leading ambition the attainment of unprecedented riches. Functional adaptation has worked towards capitalism rather than towards art or religion. We have kept up an air of supporting the arts by substituting respectability for the beauty of life, regularity of arrangement for the beauty of form, laundry work for beauty of color, historical interest for beauty of theme, and so on. If you take a man in whom this substitution has been completely effected by deliberate precept and social environment (as far as such dehumanization is possible), and present to him a fabric which drapes in graceful folds and is beautiful in color, he will immediately pronounce it eminently unsuitable for use as a dress material. The folds are irregular, and therefore dis-

reputable; the color is sensuous, and therefore immoral; the general effect appeals to the individual, idiosyncratic preference, and is, therefore, eccentric and in bad taste. Only, if the color be a very bright primary one—say bright scarlet or yellow—which will shew the least speck of dust or weatherstain, and will not, like the tertiary colors, soften and actually take on a new beauty as it wears, he will admit its suitability for uniforms to be worn on State occasions. But for everyday wear absolute perfection means to him shiny black and shiny white—the absence of color with the maximum of surface polish, the minimum of drapery, and the most conclusive evidence of newness and washedness. At first his great difficulty was with his shirt, because folds and even outrageous crumplings were unavoidable if it was to be worn at all. But, at all events, a part of the shirt could be stiff, like a cuirass. So he took a piece of linen large enough to

cover his chest, and at first, not realizing that it only needed originality and courage to immediately attain his ideal of no folds at all, arranged the folds in perfectly rectangular parallel rows, by means of his great invention of box-pleating. Down the middle, as a last concession to the traditions of the chemise, he affixed a frill, like a row of textile parsley. Thus he produced the British Islander's shirtfront. In his delight with it, he attached sleeves and a body; starched it within an inch of its life; put it on, with a complete clergyman's suit over it; and, restless with joy, walked about, sat down, got up, and even stooped. On removing the suit, he of course discovered that the shirt was all crumpled except the front. He therefore cut a large window out of his waistcoat, through which the uncrumpled part of his masterpiece could be viewed, and cut the coat away so as not to obstruct the window. And then he was in evening dress. Later on he discarded the

row of parsley; the box-pleats went next; the button-holes were reduced from three to one by the more logical spirits; variegated studs gave way to the colourless diamond or even the vapid mother-of-pearl; and finally the shirt was buttoned behind, leaving the front so unbrokenly perfect that poets and artists could not behold it without longing to write a sonnet or draw a caricature on it. *The Saturday Review*, 15th February 1896.

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The Snob

AS to snobbishness, ignorant men are always snobbish, because Nature abhors a vacuum. A man's head cannot be kept empty. If he is not taught to have a wide conception of himself as a member of a profession, or as a citizen, or, as the catechism puts it, as "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom" (and the clerk who, whether he is an atheist or not, has not found a status of that nature for himself will remain a fool until he does), he will inevitably have

a narrow conception founded on his particular little family, his particular little office, and his particular little set. This windy conceit will expand till it fills his whole head, and makes a paltry snob of him instead of a full grown Englishman. Bernard Shaw as a Clerk.

The Clerk, February 1908, p. 22.

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Social Chaos

THE vitality which places nourishment and children first, heaven and hell a somewhat remote second, and the health of society as an organic whole nowhere, may muddle successfully through the comparatively tribal stages of gregariousness; but in nineteenth century nations and twentieth century empires the determination of every man to be rich at all costs, and of every woman to be married at all costs, must, without a highly scientific social organization, produce a ruinous development of poverty, celibacy, prostitution, infant mortality, adult degeneracy, and every-

thing that wise men most dread. In short, there is no future for men, however brimming with crude vitality, who are neither intelligent nor politically educated enough to be Socialists.

Man and Superman, pp. xv., xvi.

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Social Questions

SOCIAL questions are produced by the conflict of human institutions with human feeling. For instance, we have certain institutions regulating the lives of women. To the woman whose feelings are entirely in harmony with these institutions there is no Woman Question. But during the present century, from the time of Mary Wollestonecraft onwards, women have been developing feelings, and consequently opinions, which clash with these institutions. The institutions assumed that it was natural to a woman to allow her husband to own her property and person, and to represent her in politics as a father represents his infant child. The

moment that seemed no longer natural to some women, it became grievously oppressive to them. Immediately there was a woman question. The Problem Play. *The Humanitarian,* May 1895.

Soul Hunger

IT is cheap work converting starving men with a Bible in one hand and a slice of bread in the other. I will undertake to convert West Ham to Mahometanism on the same terms. Try your hand on my men: their souls are hungry because their bodies are full.

Major Barbara, p. 299.

The Soul's Spring Cleaning

WHEN I was a fastidious youth, my elders, ever eager to confer bad advice on me and to word it with disgusting homeliness, used to tell me never to throw away dirty water until I got in clean. To which I would reply that as I had only one bucket, the thing was impossible. So until I grew

middle aged and sordid, I acted on the philosophy of Bunyan's couplet:—

A man there was, tho' some did count him mad,
The more he cast away, the more he had.

Indeed, in the matter of ideals, faiths, convictions and the like, I was of opinion that Nature abhorred a vacuum, and that you might empty your bucket boldly with the fullest assurance that you would find it fuller than ever before you had time to set it down again. But herein I youthfully deceived myself. I grew up to find the genteel world full of persons with empty buckets. *The Saturday Review*, 3rd April 1897.

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The Stage Villain

THE tradition of the stage is a tradition of villains and heroes. Shakespear was a devout believer in the existence of the true villain—the man whose terrible secret is that his fundamental moral impulses are by some freak of na-

ture inverted, so that not only are love, pity, and honor loathsome to him, and the affectation of them which society imposes on him a constant source of disgust, but cruelty, destruction, and perfidy are his most luxurious passions. This is a totally different phenomenon from the survivals of the ape and tiger in a normal man. The average normal man is covetous, lazy, selfish; but he is not malevolent, nor capable of saying to himself, "Evil: be thou my good." He only does wrong as a means to an end, which he always represents to himself as a right end. The case is exactly reversed with a villain; and it is my melancholy duty to add that we sometimes find it hard to avoid a cynical suspicion that the balance of social advantage is on the side of gifted villainy, since we see the able villain, Mephistopheles-like, doing a huge amount of good in order to win the power to do a little darling evil, out of which he is as likely as not to be cheated in the end;

whilst your normal respectable man will countenance, connive at, and grovel his way through all sorts of meanness, baseness, servility, and cruel indifference to suffering in order to enjoy a miserable two-penn'orth of social position, piety, comfort, and domestic affection, of which he, too, is often ironically defrauded by Fate. I could point to a philanthropist or two—even to their statues—whom Posterity, should it ever turn from admiring the way they spent their money to considering the way they got it, will probably compare very unfavorably with Guy Fawkes. *The Saturday Review,* 4th January 1896.

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EFFECTIVENESS of assertion is the Alpha and Omega of style. He who has nothing to assert has no style and can have none: he who has something to assert will go as far in power of style as its momentousness and his conviction will carry him. Style

Man and Superman, p. xxxv.

Submission

. . . the wicked doctrine of docility in poverty and humility under oppression.
Major Barbara, p. 189.

The Superman

NOW that we have reached the stage of international organization, Man's political capacity and magnanimity are clearly beaten by the vastness and complexity of the problems forced on him. And it is at this anxious moment that he finds, when he looks upward for a mightier mind to help him, that the heavens are empty. He will presently see that his discarded formula that Man is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, happens to be precisely true, and that it is only through his own brain and hand that this Holy Ghost, formerly the most nebulous person in the Trinity, and now become its sole survivor as it has always been its real Unity, can help him in any way. And so, if the Superman is to come, he must be born of Woman by Man's intentional

and well-considered contrivance. Conviction of this will smash everything that opposes it. Even Property and Marriage, which laugh at the laborer's petty complaint that he is defrauded of "surplus value," and at the domestic miseries of the slaves of the wedding ring, will themselves be laughed aside as the lightest of trifles if they cross this conception when it becomes a fully realized vital purpose of the race.

Man and Superman, pp. 184, 185.

Emperor and Galilean might have been appropriately, if prosaically, named The Mistake of Maximus the Mystic. It is Maximus who forces the choice on Julian, not as between ambition and principle—between Paganism and Christianity—between "the old beauty that is no longer beautiful and the new truth that is no longer true," but between Christ and Julian himself. Maximus knows that there is no going back to "The first empire" of pagan sensualism.

" The second empire," Christian or self-abnegatory idealism, is already rotten at heart. " The third empire " is what he looks for: the empire of Man asserting the eternal validity of his own will. He who can see that not on Olympus, not nailed to the cross, but in himself is God: he is the man to build Brand's bridge between the flesh and the spirit, establishing this third empire in which the spirit shall not be unknown, nor the flesh starved, nor the will tortured and baffled.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, pp. 65, 66.

The really interesting question is whether I am right in assuming that the way to produce an impression of greatness is by exhibiting a man, not as mortifying his nature by doing his duty, in the manner which our system of putting little men into great positions (not having enough great men in our influential families to go round) forces us to inculcate, but as simply doing what he naturally wants to do. *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. 207.

If there were no God, said the eighteenth century Deist, it would be necessary to invent Him. Now this eighteenth century god was *deus ex machina,* the god who helped those who could not help themselves, the god of the lazy and incapable. The nineteenth century decided that there is indeed no such god; and now Man must take in hand all the work that he used to shirk with an idle prayer. He must, in effect, change himself into the political Providence which he formerly conceived as God; and such change is not only possible, but the only sort of change that is real. The mere transfiguration of institutions, as from military and priestly dominance to commercial and scientific dominance, from commercial dominance to proletarian democracy, from slavery to serfdom, from serfdom to capitalism, from monarchy to republicanism, from polytheism to monotheism, from monotheism to atheism, from atheism to pantheistic humanitarianism, from general illiteracy to general literacy, from romance

to realism, from realism to mysticism, from metaphysics to physics, are all but changes from Tweedledum to Tweedledee; *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* But the changes from the crab apple to the pippin, from the wolf and fox to the house dog, from the charger of Henry V. to the brewer's draught horse and the race horse, are real; for here Man has played the god, subduing Nature to his intention, and ennobling or debasing Life for a set purpose. And what can be done with a wolf can be done with a man. If such monsters as the tramp and the gentleman can appear as mere by-products of Man's individual greed and folly, what might we not hope for as a main product of his universal aspiration?

Man and Superman, pp. 181, 182.

Judge us by the admitted and respected practice of our most reputable circles; and, if you know the facts and are strong enough to look them in the face,

you must admit that unless we are replaced by a more highly evolved animal —in short, by the Superman—the world must remain a den of dangerous animals among whom our few accidental supermen, our Shakespears, Goethes, Shelleys and their like, must live as precariously as lion tamers do, taking the humor of their situation, and the dignity of their superiority, as a set-off to the horror of the one and the loneliness of the other. *Man and Superman,* pp. 214, 215.

The majority of men at present in Europe have no business to be alive; and no serious progress will be made until we address ourselves earnestly and scientifically to the task of producing trustworthy human material for society.
The Perfect Wagnerite, p. 67.

There is no public enthusiast alive of twenty years' practical democratic experience who believes in the political ade-

quacy of the electorate or of the bodies it elects. The overthrow of the aristocrat has created the necessity for the Superman. *Man and Superman*, p. 223.

Men like Ruskin and Carlyle will preach to Smith and Brown for the sake of preaching, just as St. Francis preached to the birds and St. Anthony to the fishes. But Smith and Brown, like the fishes and birds, remain as they are; and poets who plan Utopias and prove that nothing is necessary for their realization but that Man should will them, perceive at last, like Richard Wagner, that the fact to be faced is that Man does not effectively will them. And he never will until he becomes Superman. *Man and Superman*, p. 218.

Until there is an England in which every man is a Cromwell, a France in which every man is a Napoleon, a Rome in which every man is a Cæsar, a Germany in which every man is a Luther plus a

Goethe, the world will be no more improved by its heroes than a Brixton villa is improved by the pyramid of Cheops. The production of such nations is the only real change possible to us. *Man and Superman,* p. 193.

If human nature, which is the highest organization of life reached on this planet, is really degenerating, then human society will decay; and no panic-begotten penal measures can possibly save it: we must, like Prometheus, set to work to make new men instead of vainly torturing old ones. *The Perfect Wagnerite,* p. 77.

DON JUAN. I sing, not arms and the hero, but the philosophic man: he who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world, in invention to discover the means of fulfilling that will, and in action to do that will by the so-discovered means. Of all other sorts of men I declare myself tired.

Man and Superman, p. 115.

I know no harder practical question than how much selfishness one ought to stand from a gifted person for the sake of his gifts or on the chance of his being right in the long run. The Superman will certainly come like a thief in the night, and be shot at accordingly; but we cannot leave our property wholly undefended on that account. On the other hand, we cannot ask the Superman simply to add a higher set of virtues to current respectable morals; for he is undoubtedly going to empty a good deal of respectable morality out like so much dirty water, and replace it by new and strange customs, shedding old obligations and accepting new and heavier ones. Every step of his progress must horrify conventional people; and if it were possible for even the most superior man to march ahead all the time, every pioneer of the march towards the Superman would be crucified.

The Sanity of Art, p. 12.

The Theatre

OUR shops and business offices are full of young men living in lonely lodgings, whose only artistic recreation is the theatre. In the theatre we practise upon them every art that can make their loneliness intolerable and heighten the charm of the bait in the snares of the street as they go home. But when a dramatist is enlightened enough to understand the danger, and sympathetic enough to come to the rescue with a play to expose the snare and warn the victim, we forbid the manager to perform it on pain of ruin, and denounce the author as a corrupter of morals. One hardly knows whether to laugh or cry at such perverse stupidity.

Three Plays by Brieux, p. li.

Toleration

TOLERATION must be imposed arbitrarily because it is not possible to make the ordinary moral man understand what toleration and liberty really mean. He will accept them verbally with alacrity, even with enthusiasm, be-

cause the word toleration has been moralized by eminent Whigs; but what he means by toleration is toleration of doctrines that he considers enlightened, and, by liberty, liberty to do what he considers right: that is, he does not mean toleration or liberty at all; for there is no need to tolerate what appears enlightened or to claim liberty to do what most people consider right. Toleration and liberty have no sense or use except as toleration of opinions that are considered damnable, and liberty to do what seems wrong. Setting Englishmen free to marry their deceased wife's sisters is not tolerated by the people who approve of it, but by the people who regard it as incestuous. Catholic Emancipation and the admission of Jews to parliament needed no toleration from Catholics and Jews: the toleration they needed was that of the people who regarded the one measure as a facilitation of idolatry, and the other as a condonation of the crucifix-

ion. Clearly such toleration is not clamored for by the multitude or by the press which reflects its prejudices. It is essentially one of those abnegations of passion and prejudice which the common man submits to because uncommon men whom he respects as wiser than himself assure him that it must be so, or the higher affairs of human destiny will suffer. *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet,* pp. 349, 350.

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The Two Pioneers

THAT is, pioneers of the march to the plains of heaven (so to speak). The second, whose eyes are in the back of his head, is the man who declares that it is wrong to do something that no one has hitherto seen any harm in.

The first, whose eyes are very long-sighted and in the usual place, is the man who declares that it is right to do something hitherto regarded as infamous.

The second is treated with great respect

by the army. They give him testimonials; name him the Good Man; and hate him like the devil.

The first is stoned and shrieked at by the whole army. They call him all manner of opprobrious names; grudge him his bare bread and water; and secretly adore him as their saviour from utter despair. *Quintessence of Ibsenism,* pp. 1, 2.

Values

THE DEVIL. I saw a man die: he was a London bricklayer's laborer with seven children. He left seventeen pounds club money; and his wife spent it all on his funeral and went into the workhouse with the children next day. She would not have spent sevenpence on her children's schooling: the law had to force her to let them be taught gratuitously; but on death she spent all she had. *Man and Superman,* p. 107.

WE have among us a certain number of people who are morbidly ensitive to sexual impressions, and quite insensible to artistic ones. We have certain sects in which such a condition is artificially induced as a matter of religious duty. Children have their affections repressed, and their susceptibility to emotional excitement nursed on sin, wrath, terror, and vengeance, whilst they are forbidden to go to the theatre or to amuse themselves with stories or "profane" pictures. Naturally, when such people grow up, life becomes to them a prolonged temptation of St. Anthony. You try to please them by a picture which appeals to their delight in graceful form and bright warm colour, to their share in the romance which peoples the woods and streams with sylphs and water maidens, to the innocent and highly recreative love of personal beauty, which is one of the great advantages of having a sex at all. To your horror and discomposure, you are

met by a shriek of "Nude woman: nude woman: police!" The one thing that the normal spectator overlooks in the picture is the one thing that St. Anthony sees in it. Let me again put his protest in Mr ——'s own words: "Nothing can justify the exhibition of nude and semi-nude women as a means of amusement for a mixed audience. They are shameful productions, and deserve the condemnation of all right-thinking people. The manager deserves, and should have, the immediate attention of the County Council." You remonstrate, perhaps, from the point of view of the artist. Mr —— at once pleads: "They are so very obviously *living*. Human nature is so very much in evidence." And there you have the whole of Mr. ——'s pessimistic, misanthropic philosophy in two sentences. Human nature and the human body are to him nasty things. Sex is a scourge. Woman is a walking temptation which should be covered up as

much as possible. Well, let us be charitable to Mr ——'s infirmity, and ask him, as kindly as may be, what good covering women up will do. Carmencita is covered up: our skirt dancers are all petticoats; each of our serpentine dancers carries drapery enough to make skirts for a whole dozen schoolgirls. And yet they appeal far more to the sex instinct and far less to the artistic instinct than the Naiads and Phryne. There is only one solution of the difficulty; and that is for Mr —— and those who sympathize with him to keep away from the —— Theatre. Of course that will not protect them altogether. Every low-necked dress, every gust of wind that catches a skirt and reveals an ankle, perhaps every child in whom "human nature is in evidence" to the extent of a pair of sturdy little legs, may be a torment to the victims of this most pitiable of all obsessions. A quarrel with human nature admits of no fundamental remedy except the

knife; and I should be sorry to see the members of the Vigilance Association cutting their own throats: they are useful and even necessary in keeping order among the people who suffer from morbid attractions instead of morbid repulsions. For it must not be forgotten that Mr ——'s error does not lie in his claim that the community shall suppress indecent exhibitions, but in his attempt to make nudity or semi-nudity the criterion of indecency. Perhaps I should qualify this statement of his position by limiting nudity to the female sex; for I notice that the semi-nudity which is quite a common spectacle in the case of male athletes is not complained of, though, if there were anything in the Vigilance Association's view of such exhibitions as demoralizing, our women ought by this time to be much more demoralized than our men. *The Saturday Review,* 6th April 1895.

LADY. Havent you noticed that people always exaggerate the value of the things they havent got? The poor think they need nothing but riches to be quite happy and good. Everybody worships truth, purity, unselfishness, for the same reason—because they have no experience of them. Oh, if they only knew! **The Deadly Virtues**

NAPOLEON [*with angry derision*] If they only knew! Pray do you know?

LADY. Yes. I had the misfortune to be born good. And it is a misfortune, I can tell you, General. I really am truthful and unselfish and all the rest of it; and it's nothing but cowardice; want of character; want of being really, strongly, positively oneself.

The Man of Destiny, p. 188.

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THE greatest force on the side of vivisection is the mighty and indeed divine force of curiosity. Here we have no decaying tribal instinct which men **Vivisection**

strive to root out of themselves as they strive to root out the tiger's lust for blood. On the contrary, the curiosity of the ape, or of the child who pulls out the legs and wings of a fly to see what it will do without them, or who, on being told that a cat dropped out of the window will always fall on its legs, immediately tries the experiment on the nearest cat from the highest window in the house (I protest I did it myself from the first floor only), is as nothing compared to the thirst for knowledge of the philosopher, the poet, the biologist, and the naturalist. . . . When Gray said "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," he forgot that it is godlike to be wise; and since nobody wants bliss particularly, or could stand more than a very brief taste of it if it were attainable, and since everybody, by the deepest law of the Life Force, desires to be godlike, it is stupid, and indeed blasphemous and despairing, to hope that the thirst for knowledge will

either diminish or consent to be subordinated to any other end whatsoever. We shall see later on that the claim that has arisen in this way for the unconditioned pursuit of knowledge is as idle as all dreams of unconditioned activity; but none the less the right to knowledge must be regarded as a fundamental human right. The fact that men of science have had to fight so hard to secure its recognition, and are still so vigorously persecuted when they discover anything that is not quite palatable to vulgar people, makes them sorely jealous for that right; and when they hear a popular outcry for the suppression of a method of research which has an air of being scientific, their first instinct is to rally to the defence of that method without further consideration, with the result that they sometimes, as in the case of vivisection, presently find themselves fighting on a false issue. *The Doctor's Dilemma,* pp. xxxix., xl.

The real remedy for vivisection is the remedy for all the mischief that the medical profession and all the other professions are doing: namely, more knowledge. The juries which send the poor Peculiars to prison, and give vivisectionists heavy damages against humane persons who accuse them of cruelty; the editors and councillors and student-led mobs who are striving to make Vivisection one of the watchwords of our civilization, are not doctors: they are the British public, all so afraid to die that they will cling frantically to any idol which promises to cure all their diseases, and crucify anyone who tells them that they must not only die when their time comes, but die like gentlemen. In their paroxysms of cowardice and selfishness they force the doctors to humor their folly and ignorance.

The Doctor's Dilemma, p. lx.

The right to knowledge is not the only right; and its exercise must be limited by

respect for other rights, and for its own exercise by others. When a man says to Society, "May I torture my mother in pursuit of knowledge?" Society replies, "No." If he pleads, "What! Not even if I have a chance of finding out how to cure cancer by doing it?" Society still says, "Not even then." If the scientist, making the best of his disappointment, goes on to ask may he torture a dog, the stupid and callous people who do not realize that a dog is a fellow-creature, and sometimes a good friend, may say Yes; though Shakespear, Dr. Johnson, and their like may say No. But even those who say "You may torture *a* dog" never say "You may torture *my* dog." And nobody says, "Yes, because in the pursuit of knowledge you may do as you please." Just as even the stupidest people say, in effect, "If you cannot attain to knowledge without burning your mother, you must do without knowledge," so the wisest people say, "If you

cannot attain to knowledge without torturing a dog, you must do without knowledge." *The Doctor's Dilemma*, pp. xli., xlii.

War

THE DEVIL. In the old chronicles you read of earthquakes and pestilences, and are told that these shewed the power and majesty of God and the littleness of Man. Nowadays the chronicles describe battles. In a battle two bodies of men shoot at one another with bullets and explosive shells until one body runs away, when the others chase the fugitives on horseback and cut them to pieces as they fly. And this, the chronicle concludes, shews the greatness and majesty of empires, and the littleness of the vanquished. Over such battles the people run about the streets yelling with delight, and egg their Government on to spend hundreds of millions of money in the slaughter, whilst the strongest Ministers dare not spend an extra penny in the pound against the

poverty and pestilence through which they themselves daily walk.

Man and Superman, p. 108.

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Warnings

FANNY. Our motto is "You cannot learn to skate without making yourself ridiculous."

TROTTER. Skate! What has that to do with it?

FANNY. Thats not all. It goes on, "The ice of life is slippery." *Fanny's First Play* (unpublished, 1912).

Never forget that if you leave your law to judges and your religion to bishops you will presently find yourself without either law or religion. If you doubt this, ask any decent judge or bishop. Do *not* ask somebody who does not know what a judge is, or what a bishop is, or what the law is, or what religion is. In other words, do not ask your newspaper. Journalists are too poorly

paid in this country to know anything that is fit for publication.

Getting Married, p. 204.

We must either breed political capacity, or be ruined by democracy. *Man and Superman*, p. xxiv.

To all wildly popular things comes, suddenly and inexorably, death without hope of resurrection. *Saturday Review*, 2nd July 1910.

Wealth

HITHERTO the economists had always treated wealth as though it could be measured by exchange value. Ruskin exposed this as a fundamental error: a profound religious, social and philosophical error: in short a damnable heresy. He asked whether Tintoretto's irremovable, unexchangeable, and consequently commercially worthless ceiling in the School of St. Roch, in Venice, was of less value than an obscene French lithograph exchangeable for two francs

fifty in the Rue de Rivoli, and produced expressly for sale to English tourists. This is but one illustration of Ruskin's method of argument. By it he succeeded in making an end of the folly of measuring social need by commercial demand, or wealth by exchange value. And he introduced the conception of "illth" as a positive thing to be measured and dealt with as urgently as "wellth."

Ruskin's advance was reduced to pure economics by Stanley Jevons, who treated Ruskin's wealth and illth as utility and disutility; raised anew the whole question of value; made an end of the theory that value is the result of labor instead of being the cause of it; abolished the old distinction between use value and exchange value; and formulated a law founded on the comparison of abstract desirabilities, which gave new life to academic economics by bringing it into direct relation with human passion. Life, Literature and Po-

litical Economy. *Clare Market Review*, January 1906, p. 32.

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Wealth and Punishment

THERE are two things that must be set right, or we shall perish, like Rome, of soul atrophy disguised as empire.

The first is, that the daily ceremony of dividing the wealth of the country among its inhabitants shall be so conducted that no crumb shall go to any able-bodied adults who are not producing by their personal exertions not only a full equivalent for what they take, but a surplus sufficient to provide for their superannuation and pay back the debt due for their nurture.

The second is that the deliberate infliction of malicious injuries which now goes on under the name of punishment be abandoned. *Major Barbara*, p. 198.

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The Will

THE will is our old friend the soul or spirit of man; and the doctrine of justification, not by works, but by faith,

clearly derives its validity from the consideration that no action, taken apart from the will behind it, has any moral character; for example, the acts which make the murderer and incendiary infamous are exactly similar to those which make the patriotic hero famous. "Original sin" is the will doing mischief. "Divine grace" is the will doing good. *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 12, footnote.

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The Will to Believe

THERE is no harder scientific fact in the world than the fact that belief can be produced in practically unlimited quantity and intensity, without observation or reasoning, and even in defiance of both, by the simple desire to believe founded on a strong interest in believing. Everybody recognizes this in the case of the amatory infatuations of the adolescents who see angels and heroes in obviously (to others) commonplace and even objectionable maidens and youths. But it holds good over the en-

tire field of human activity. The hardest-headed materialist will become a consulter of table-rappers and slate-writers if he loses a child or a wife so beloved that the desire to revive and communicate with them becomes irresistible. The cobbler believes that there is nothing like leather. The Imperialist who regards the conquest of England by a foreign power as the worst of political misfortunes believes that the conquest of a foreign power by England would be a boon to the conquered.

The Doctor's Dilemma, pp. xvii., xviii.

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The Will to Live and its Consequences

WE can now, as soon as we are strong-minded enough, drop the Nirvana nonsense, the pessimism, the rationalism, the supernatural theology, and all the other subterfuges to which we cling because we are afraid to look life straight in the face and see in it, not the fulfilment of a moral law or of the deductions of reason, but the satisfac-

tion of a passion in us of which we can give no rational account whatever.

It is natural for a man to shrink from the terrible responsibility thrown on him by this inexorable fact. All his stock excuses vanish before it: "The woman tempted me," "The serpent tempted me," "I was not myself at the time," "I meant well," "My passion got the better of my reason," "It was my duty to do it," "The Bible says that we should do it," "Everybody does it," and so on. Nothing is left but the frank avowal: "I did it because I am built that way." Every man hates to say that. He wants to believe that his generous actions are characteristic of him, and that his meannesses are aberrations or concessions to the force of circumstances. *The Sanity of Art,* pp. 58, 59.

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The Will and the Spirit

WHEN a hungry and penniless man stands between his good and his bad angel in front of a baker's shop, the

good angel cannot seize and drag him away, nor can the bad angel thrust the loaf into his hands. The victory of honesty or the consummation of a theft must be effected by the man; and his choice will depend a good deal on the sort of man he is. Not only is he an indispensable agent; not only is he the vehicle of the force that moves him; but he is also the vehicle of the force that chooses. He is, in the old phrase, the temple of the Holy Ghost. He has, in another old phrase, the divine spark within him. *Unpublished.*

Wisdom

MEN are wise in proportion, not to their experience, but to their capacity for experience. *Man and Superman,* p. 239.

Woman

IF we have come to think that the nursery and the kitchen are the natural sphere of a woman, we have done so exactly as English children come to think that a cage is the natural sphere

of a parrot—because they have never seen one anywhere else. No doubt there are Philistine parrots who agree with their owners that it is better to be in a cage than out, so long as there is plenty of hempseed and Indian corn there. There may even be idealist parrots who persuade themselves that the mission of a parrot is to minister to the happiness of a private family by whistling and saying "Pretty Polly," and that it is in the sacrifice of its liberty to this altruistic pursuit that a true parrot finds the supreme satisfaction of its soul. I will not go so far as to affirm that there are theological parrots who are convinced that imprisonment is the will of God because it is unpleasant; but I am confident that there are rationalist parrots who can demonstrate that it would be a cruel kindness to let a parrot out to fall a prey to cats, or at least to forget its accomplishments and coarsen its naturally delicate fibres in an unprotected struggle for existence.

Still, the only parrot a free-souled person can sympathize with is the one that insists on being let out as the first condition of its making itself agreeable. A selfish bird, you may say: one which puts its own gratification before that of the family which is so fond of it—before even the greatest happiness of the greatest number: one that, in aping the independent spirit of a man, has unparroted itself and become a creature that has neither the home-loving nature of a bird nor the strength and enterprise of a mastiff. All the same, you respect that parrot in spite of your conclusive reasoning; and if it persists, you will have either to let it out or kill it.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, pp. 43, 44.

The busybody finds that people cannot be freed from their failings from without. They must free themselves. When Nora is strong enough to live out of the doll's house, she will go out of it of her own accord if the door stands

open; but if before that period you take her by the scruff of the neck and thrust her out, she will only take refuge in the next establishment of the kind that offers to receive her. Woman has thus two enemies to deal with: the old-fashioned one who wants to keep the door locked, and the new-fashioned one who wants to thrust her into the street before she is ready to go.

Quintessence of Ibsenism, p. 104.

It is false to say that Woman is now directly the slave of Man: she is the immediate slave of duty; and as man's path to freedom is strewn with the wreckage of the duties and ideals he has trampled on, so must hers be. She may indeed mask her iconoclasm by proving in rationalist fashion, as man has often done for the sake of a quiet life, that all these discarded idealist conceptions will be fortified instead of shattered by her emancipation. To a person with a turn for logic, such proofs

are as easy as playing the piano is to Paderewski. But it will not be true. A whole basketful of ideals of the most sacred quality will be smashed by the achievement of equality for women and men. Those who shrink from such a clatter and breakage may comfort themselves with the reflection that the replacement of the broken goods will be prompt and certain. It is always a case of "The ideal is dead: long live the ideal!" And the advantage of the work of destruction is, that every new ideal is less of an illusion than the one it has supplanted; so that the destroyer of ideals, though denounced as an enemy of society, is in fact sweeping the world clear of lies. *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 45.

Now of all the idealist abominations that make society pestiferous, I doubt if there be any so mean as that of forcing self-sacrifice on a woman under pretence that she likes it; and, if she ventures to

contradict the pretence, declaring her no true woman. *Quintessence of Ibsenism,* p. 33.

The fundamental reason for not allowing women to risk their lives in battle and for giving them the first chance of escape in all dangerous emergencies: in short, for treating their lives as more valuable than male lives, is not in the least a chivalrous reason, though men may consent to it under the illusion of chivalry. It is a simple matter of necessity; for if a large proportion of women were killed or disabled, no possible readjustment of our marriage law could avert the depopulation and consequent political ruin of the country. *Getting Married,* p. 149.

A slave state is always ruled by those who can get round the masters: that is, by the more cunning of the slaves themselves. Thus fashionable London, like its outposts on the Coast and the Riviera, is bound, body and soul, under

an organized tyranny of servants and tradesmen which no spirited coolie would endure without rebellion. That is why Liberal Dukes and Radical Earls excite no surprise, whereas a Radical valet or a Liberal west-end jeweller has never yet been heard of.

The slavery of women means the tyranny of women. No fascinating woman ever wants to emancipate her sex: her object is to gather power into the hands of Man, because she knows that she can govern him. She is no more jealous of his nominal supremacy than he himself is jealous of the strength and speed of his horse.

Correspondence.

The cunning and attractive "slave women" disguise their strength as womanly timidity, their unscrupulousness as womanly innocence, their impunities as womanly defencelessness: simple men are duped by them, and little ones disarmed and intimidated. They can

be beaten only by brutal selfishness or by their own weapons, which many men learn to use with more than feminine skill. *Correspondence.*

It is only the proud, straightforward women who wish, not to govern, but to be free, who object to slavery and give a hand to the unattractive, drudging women, who cannot get round anybody. *Correspondence.*

Women have to unlearn the false good manners of their slavery before they acquire the genuine good manners of their freedom. *You Never Can Tell,* p. 334.

A woman like Candida has divine insight: she loves our souls, and not our follies and vanities and illusions, or our collars and coats, or any other of the rags and tatters we are rolled up in. *Candida,* p. 143.

Women begin to be socially tolerable at thirty, and improve until the deepen-

ing of their consciousness is checked by the decay of their faculties. But they begin to be pretty much earlier than thirty, and are indeed sometimes at their best in that respect long before their chattering is, apart from the illusions of sex, to be preferred in serious moments to the silent sympathy of an intelligent pet animal. *The Saturday Review*, 13th March 1897.

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Woman and Sex Initiative

AMONG the friends to whom I have read this play [*Man and Superman*] in manuscript are some of my own sex who are shocked at the "unscrupulousness," meaning the total disregard of masculine fastidiousness, with which the woman pursues her purpose. It does not occur to them that if women were as fastidious as men, morally or physically, there would be an end of the race. Is there anything meaner than to throw necessary work upon other people and then disparage it as unworthy

and indelicate? We laugh at the haughty American nation because it makes the negro clean its boots and then proves the moral and physical inferiority of the negro by the fact that he is a shoeblack; but we ourselves throw the whole drudgery of creation on one sex, and then imply that no female of any womanliness or delicacy would initiate any effort in that direction. There are no limits to male hypocrisy in this matter. No doubt there are moments when man's sexual immunities are made acutely humiliating to him. When the terrible moment of birth arrives, its supreme importance and its superhuman effort and peril, in which the father has no part, dwarf him into the meanest insignificance: he slinks out of the way of the humblest petticoat, happy if he be poor enough to be pushed out of the house to outface his ignominy by drunken rejoicings. But when the crisis is over he takes his revenge, swaggering as the bread-

winner, and speaking of Woman's "sphere" with condescension, even with chivalry, as if the kitchen and the nursery were less important than the office in the city. When his swagger is exhausted he drivels into erotic poetry or sentimental uxoriousness; and the Tennysonian King Arthur posing at Guinevere becomes Don Quixote grovelling before Dulcinea. You must admit that here Nature beats Comedy out of the field: the wildest hominist or feminist farce is insipid after the most commonplace "slice of life." The pretence that women do not take the initiative is part of the farce. Why, the whole world is strewn with snares, traps, gins and pitfalls for the capture of men by women. Give women the vote, and in five years there will be a crushing tax on bachelors. Men, on the other hand, attach penalties to marriage, depriving women of property, of the franchise, of the free use of their limbs, of that ancient symbol of immortality, the right

to make oneself at home in the house of God by taking off the hat, of everything that he can force Woman to dispense with without compelling himself to dispense with her. All in vain. Woman must marry because the race must perish without her travail: if the risk of death and the certainty of pain, danger and unutterable discomforts cannot deter her, slavery and swaddled ankles will not. And yet we assume that the force that carries women through all these perils and hardships, stops abashed before the primnesses of our behavior for young ladies. It is assumed that the woman must wait, motionless, until she is wooed. Nay, she often does wait motionless. That is how the spider waits for the fly. But the spider spins her web. And if the fly, like my hero, shews a strength that promises to extricate him, how swiftly does she abandon her pretence of passiveness, and openly fling coil after coil about him until he is secured for ever!

If the really impressive books and other art-works of the world were produced by ordinary men, they would express more fear of women's pursuit than love of their illusory beauty. But ordinary men cannot produce really impressive art-works. Those who can are men of genius: that is, men selected by Nature to carry on the work of building up an intellectual consciousness of her own instinctive purpose. Accordingly, we observe in the man of genius all the unscrupulousness and all the "self-sacrifice" (the two things are the same) of Woman. He will risk the stake and the cross; starve, when necessary, in a garret all his life; study women and live on their work and care as Darwin studied worms and lived upon sheep; work his nerves into rags without payment, a sublime altruist in his disregard of himself, an atrocious egotist in his disregard of others. Here Woman meets a purpose as impersonal, as irresistible as her own; and the clash

is sometimes tragic. When it is complicated by the genius being a woman, then the game is one for a king of critics: your George Sand becomes a mother to gain experience for the novelist and to develop her, and gobbles up men of genius, Chopins, Mussets and the like, as mere *hors d'œuvres.*
Man and Superman, pp. xvii., xviii., xix.

It is impossible to demonstrate that the initiative in sex transactions remains with Woman, and has been confirmed to her, so far, more and more by the suppression of rapine and discouragement of importunity, without being driven to very serious reflections on the fact that this initiative is politically the most important of all the initiatives, because our political experiment of democracy, the last refuge of cheap misgovernment, will ruin us if our citizens are ill bred. *Man and Superman,* pp. xxi., xxii.

Work for the Unemployed

FOR my part I see no difficulty in finding work for the unemployed. Take the places they live in, for instance. There is the urgently necessary work of knocking those places down, burning their putrid *débris*, and replacing them with decent dwellings in airy and handsome streets. The spots to begin with are already marked by Mr. Charles Booth on the map of London in black. It is true that there is no commercial demand for a new and decent city; but pray for what great social work is there any commercial demand? How long more will it take us to see that great nations work for national profits, and keep the little souls who can understand nothing but commercial profits out of the national councils. *The Times*, 14th November 1905.

The Young and the Old

FANNY. It's all that the young can do for the old, to shock them and keep them up to date.
Fanny's First Play (unpublished, 1912).

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